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Cover Scroll of the Chaya's ship trade to Cochinchina, c.1630.

The cover is part of the 'Scroll of the Chaya's ship trade to Cochinchina', a painting on silk probably dated to between the late 1620s and early 1630s. The work depicts the journey from Nagasaki to Hội An of a red-seal ship owned by the family of Chaya, one of the three richest merchants in Kyoto during the seventeenth century. Notes on the scroll explain that the journey of 1,800 *ri* (72, 000 kilometres) from Nagasaki to Cochinchina lasted 40 days; the ship carried the red seal from the Japanese government which bestowed permission to trade in Southeast Asia; it measured 8.1 metres in width and 45 metres in length, and carried 300 passengers, etc. The panel reproduced here depicts the Hội An customs house and watchtower immediately behind it. The figure dressed in blue is Chaya, the captain and owner of the ship, seen here presenting his gifts to the customs officer sitting at the back. An interpreter stands on Chaya's left-hand side, while an entourage of three Japanese warriors await their captain outside the house. The cannons at the right flank the front gate which is guarded by 15 soldiers in all. The note above the galley outside the customs house reads 'pleasure boat'.

The panel is reproduced from Asao Naohiro, *Nihon No Kinsei*, Tokyo, 1991, p. 14, published by Chuo Koronsha, by courtesy of the publisher, Shogakukan Inc., and Jyomyo-ji. The Jyomyo Temple was built in 1646 in Nagoya, Japan, through a donation by the Chaya family.

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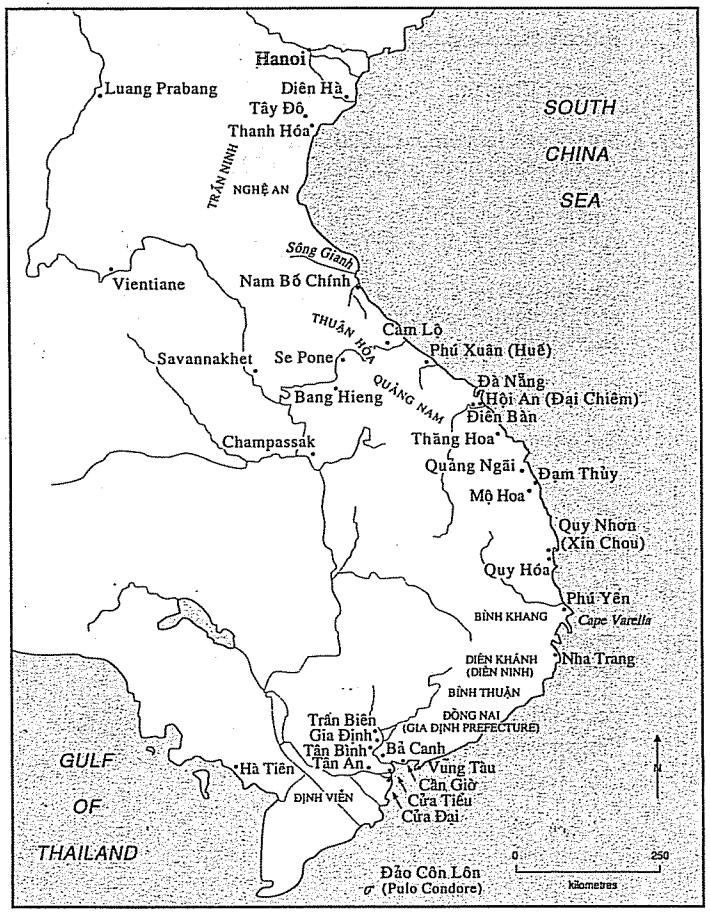
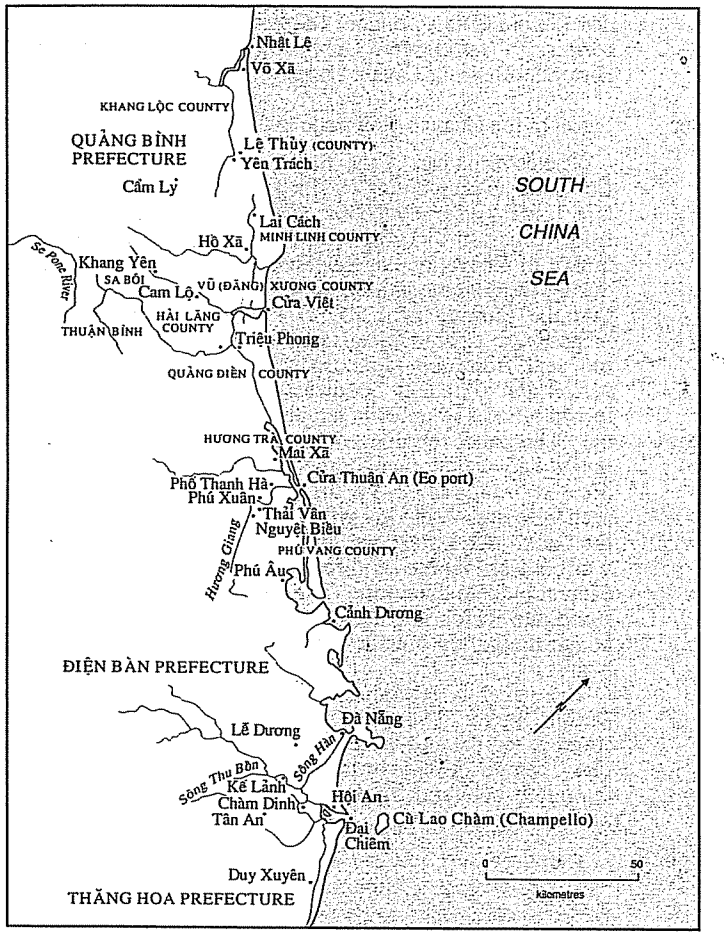


Map 1. Indochina: Main Places Mentioned in the Texts



Map 2. Central Vietnam: Places Mentioned in the Texts

PREFACE

Li Tana and Anthony Reid

This is the third in a series of volumes designed to make available some of the crucial sources for a balanced understanding of Southeast Asian economic history.

The Nguyễn kingdom of the seventeenth and eighteenth century is a particularly vivid illustration of the problem of sources in this complex region. Because it was determinedly Vietnamese, with a vigorous tradition of writing in Chinese characters, yet also occupied a vital crossroads of the South China Sea, the sources essential for studying its economic history are in Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Dutch, French and English. Nobody who has written about it has commanded all these languages and controlled all the scattered source material. An adequate economic history cannot be written until more of these difficult sources are translated and edited. This volume can only embrace a tiny fraction of the material available, but we hope it will act as a stimulus to further work.

The choice of documents for translation was essentially that of the editors, but many people have contributed to the completion of the volume. The translators of each document are indicated, and we thank Ruurdje Laarhoven and Kristine Alilunas-Rodgers for going far beyond the call of translation duty. David Bulbeck, in addition to organizing the complex maps, glossary and index, has laboured to produce a consistent volume from very inconsistent sources. David Marr was an invaluable guide at every step, while Brigitte d'Ozouville provided enlightenment for some particularly difficult cases of French translation. Evelyn Winburn computer typeset and formatted the book, and devised a Vietnamese font for its use. Beatrice Bodart-Bailey located our cover illustration, and Ian Heyward of the ANU Cartography Unit redrew our maps for publication.

We are grateful to the Toyo Bunko, Tokyo, for reproduction of the Vietnamese maps, and to Madeleine Ly Tio-Fane and the Royal Society of Arts and Science of Mauritius for reproduction of the portrait of Poivre. We also thank Chuo Koronsha, Tokyo, for allowing us to reproduce the cover illustration; Oxford

University Press, Kuala Lumpur, for permission to reproduce our Figures 2, 8 and 9; and the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris, for permission to reproduce our Figures 5 and 7.

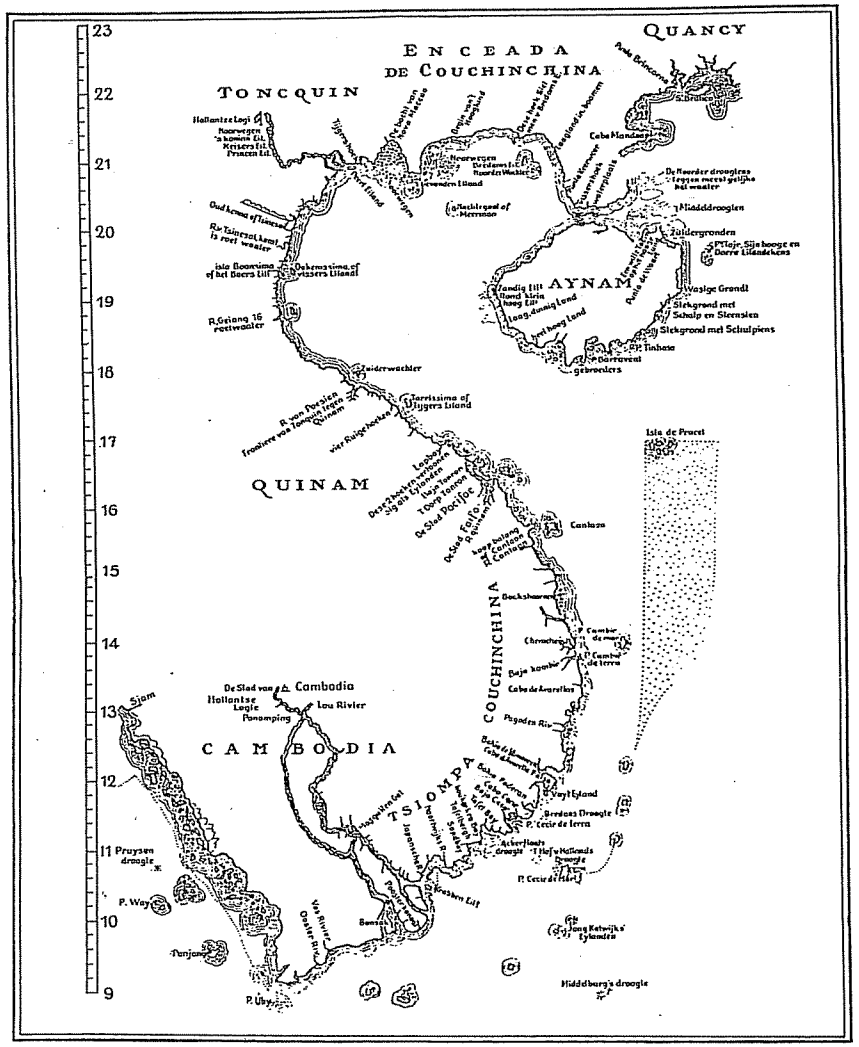


Figure 1. Dutch Map of Vietnamese and Neighbouring Kingdoms, c.1660. Maps of the East Indies, Nos 265 and 269 of the Leupe Catalogue, General Dutch Archive.

1. INTRODUCTION

THE VIETNAMESE SOUTHERN FRONTIER

Li Tana and Anthony Reid

Vietnam assumed roughly its present peculiar shape in 1802, from the Red River to the Mekong mouth, as a result of the unifying conquests of Nguyễn Ánh. The dense populations and intense rice agriculture of two rich river deltas are joined by a thousand kilometres of narrow coastal settlement where communication by land is difficult. Vietnamese have always believed in the essential unity of their territory and people, and never more passionately than during the century before 1975 when disunity was imposed by foreigners. But geography was in conflict with this conviction from the moment Vietnamese began to settle in large numbers in the formerly Cham territory of the central coast in the sixteenth century.

The historic heart of Vietnam, the Red River delta known to outsiders as Tongking, was already the most heavily populated part of Southeast Asia by 1500. When the elaborate system of dykes and irrigation canals was upset by war or natural disaster, the delicate balance between population and environment broke down. The second half of the sixteenth century was particularly cruel on both counts, and thousands of desperate colonists moved southward into the lands of opportunity in the south which had already been conquered from Champa. Most travelled on foot, no doubt moving in stages from one valley to the next. Communication with the heartland they had left became increasingly difficult the further south they penetrated. Moreover the multi-ethnic character and the varied economic opportunities of the new lands of the south made the southern experience very different from life in the Confucian state developed by the Lê dynasty in Tongking.

The effective founder of the southern state was Nguyễn Hoàng, whose father Nguyễn Kim had led a loyalist movement to defend the Lê dynasty against the usurpation of the Mạc. This movement was eventually successful in driving the Mạc towards the Chinese border, but only after a long and ruinous civil war.

Nguyễn Kim died in 1545, and leadership of the movement was seized by his son-in-law Trịnh Kiểm, founder of the Trịnh lineage which ruled Tongking in the name of the Lê dynasty from 1592, when Hanoi was seized from the Mạc, until the late eighteenth century. Nguyễn Hoàng escaped the suspicion of his elder brother-in-law by remaining on the southern frontier, and in 1569 obtained the governance of the then southernmost province of Quảng Nam. He built a solid base of support in the wealthy southern area, but ruled it on behalf of the powerless Lê emperors, and continued to play a part in the complex politics of Tongking until 1600, when he was already 75. After his death in 1613, his successors headed a separate state, whose only link with Tongking was a nominal acceptance of the legitimacy of the Lê sovereigns who were effective prisoners of the Trịnh.

Nguyễn Hoàng's successors ruled this state for almost two centuries, until the Trịnh army intervened after the Tây Sơn rebellion in the 1770s. Its northern border was heavily fortified against the Trịnh rulers of Tongking, with whom there was a constant state of warfare between 1620 and 1674. Though heavily outnumbered, the Nguyễn were able to hold the border and often to take the offensive. They adapted more effectively than their northern rivals to muskets, cannon and galleys of European style, and had a highly motivated and disciplined army. The same advantages enabled them to expand continually to the south and west, absorbing Champa in the late seventeenth century and the Cambodian territory at the mouth of the Mekong in the eighteenth. Towards the troubled countries to its west, Cambodia and Laos, this new Vietnamese state acted as a great power, contesting hegemony with the Siamese but in general having the upper hand.

The difficulty of knowing what to call this state has no doubt contributed to its historical obscurity. Despite its long life, the Vietnamese themselves did not accept it as a legitimate empire such as the Lê had ruled. When they wanted to distinguish it they called it the 'inner region' (*Đàng Trong*), as opposed to the 'outer region' (*Đàng Ngoài*) in the north. Foreigners had no doubt that it was a state. For the Portuguese, French and English it was Cochinchina, and this is the name which appears on European maps of the seventeenth to nineteenth century. On the other hand the Chinese, Japanese and Dutch who learned much from them, used the name of the most important province, Quảng Nam, for the whole state. All Europeans by contrast referred to the northern Trịnh state as Tongking, a corruption of one of the names of Hanoi.

The term Cochinchina has an interesting history, moving south as rapidly as the Vietnamese themselves. The Portuguese picked it up in Melaka from the Malays, who used the term Kuchi for Vietnam, having adapted it from the old Chinese term *Jiao zhi* (*Gao zhi* in Cantonese). To distinguish it from another

Kuchi known to them in India (the Kerala port of Cochin), the Malays called Vietnam Kuchi-China, or in European usage Cochinchina.[1] At that time it referred to a single Hanoi-centred state, but the Nguyễn state which emerged in the south in the seventeenth century was more important to Portuguese, Malays and Southeast Asians in general, and it quickly usurped the name. In the nineteenth century the Mekong delta was developed as the granary of Vietnam, and the French gave the name Cochinchina to the colony they established there in 1867. The original heartland of Cochinchina, the area around Huế, was now the capital of the unified Vietnam kingdom, and under the French protectorate it was given one of the names of that kingdom, Annam.

For the Vietnamese courts, the complex dynastic struggles of the sixteenth century provided the basis of their separate claims to legitimacy. There were however more basic reasons why Cochinchina followed a separate course from Tongking after 1600. The Champa coast which it inherited had always been a strategic pathway for shipping between China and Southeast Asia. Nguyễn Hoàng founded his state at a moment when this trade reached unprecedented levels, partly as a result of the legalization of trade to the south by the Ming Emperor Mu-tsung in 1567. The Japanese also had their brief flirtation with overseas trade from the late sixteenth century until 1635, sending about ten ships a year to the south in this period. Direct China-Japan trade was banned by the Ming government, so that Japan's need for Chinese silk, and China's for Japanese silver, had to be met at neutral ports. Of these the most convenient was the Cochinchina port which Nguyễn Hoàng had established at Hội An (Faifo to Europeans). This became the largest single destination of both Chinese and Japanese ships, and in the trading season it represented a great fair where Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese exchanged their wares.

The Tokugawa ban on Japanese travelling abroad in 1635 was undoubtedly a blow to the trade of Hội An, but it remained an important market for Chinese junks to collect Southeast Asian goods for shipment not only to China but also to Japan itself. After the 'closure' of Japan, Chinese junks from Southeast Asian ports were still permitted to visit Nagasaki. Because their arrival was carefully monitored by the Japanese, we know that Hội An was the most important Southeast Asian port for Japan's foreign trade from 1650 until well into the eighteenth century.[2] The revenue derived from this entrepot trade was of great importance to the Nguyễn regime. Cochinchina also exported forest products such as calambac, eaglewood, ivory, lac and gold, which were brought down

[1] 'In Malaca his country is called Cauchy Chyna, on account of Cauchy Coulam' — *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires*, trans. A. Cortesão, London, 1944, p. 114.
[2] From Iwao Seiichi, *Kaigai Koshoshi no Shiten*, Tokyo, 1976.

from the hills by non-Vietnamese minority peoples as tribute or trade items. As many of the documents below show, Cochinchina was ethnically pluralistic, with Vietnamese and Confucian manners gaining ground only very slowly over the variety of cultures which had existed in the southern regions for centuries. In these respects, the southern Vietnamese state was much more 'Southeast Asian' than its northern rival.

Despite its importance as an actor in the Asian trade system and an example of Southeast Asian ethnic complexity, Nguyễn Vietnam has received very little scholarly attention. The scandal of semi-permanent division of the state and the prominence of non-Vietnamese elements in Cochinchinese society, make this a problematic period for historians in the national tradition. The difficulty of the sources has severely restricted the number of outsiders who addressed these issues. The forthcoming thesis of Li Tana[3] will go some way to redress this neglect.

There is no shortage of sources for this important period of Vietnam's southward expansion, but they are not accessible to most Southeast Asian historians. Vietnamese dynastic histories from Hanoi naturally had little to say about the southern rival, but the Nguyễn dynasty which unified Vietnam at the beginning of the nineteenth century took a very positive view of the previous Nguyễn rulers of Cochinchina. The literati of Huế compiled a coherent account of the government of the southern kingdom from the time Nguyễn Hoàng set out as governor of Thuận Hóa in 1558 — the *Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên*. In addition, a much more detailed account of economic and social organization than the dynastic histories provide is available from Lê Quý Đôn's encyclopaedic compilation, the *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục* (1776). Despite the bureaucratic difficulties of which they complained, foreign traders also visited Cochinchina at regular intervals, and left valuable descriptions of some of the topics least well treated in the dynastic histories — foreign trade, the life of the port, and the everyday life, customs and mores of Vietnamese.

We have selected for translations those descriptions which describe the economic and social life of the region and which, although published, remain very difficult of access for readers of English. All the accounts below are here translated for the first time into English, from Vietnamese, Chinese, Dutch and French. There are also a number of useful descriptions of English trading missions to the Cochinchina capital, of which those of Bowyear in 1695-6 and Chapman in 1778 are particularly relevant to this collection, but these have already

[3]Li Tana, *"The Inner Region" (Cochinchina): A Social and Economic History of Nguyễn Vietnam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.* Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, to be submitted in 1992.

been conveniently collected and published by Alistair Lamb.[4] The other major set of sources not represented here are those generated by the Portuguese Macao connection, which are admirably covered in two books by Pierre-Yves Manguin.[5]

[4]Alistair Lamb, *The Mandarin Road to Old Huế. Narratives of Anglo-Vietnamese Diplomacy from the 17th Century to the Eve of the French Conquest*, London, 1970.
[5]Pierre-Yves Manguin. *Les Portugais sur les côtes de Viet-nam et du Campa: Etude sur les routes maritimes et les relations commerciales, d'après les sources portugaises (XIV^e, XVII^e, XVIII^e siècles)*, Paris, 1972. *Les Nguyễn, Macau et le Portugal: Aspects politiques et commerciaux d'une relation priviligiée en Mer de Chine 1773-1802*, Paris, 1984.

2. THE TRIALS OF A FOREIGN MERCHANT

LETTER BY JERONIMUS WONDERAER FROM HỘI AN, 1602

Translated by Ruurdje Laarhoven[1]

Jeronimus Wonderaer, a silk expert, dictated this letter to his junior colleague Cornelis Ruyll (who spoke Malay and later wrote a Malay grammar). Both men were merchants employed by the Dutch East India Company (VOC). They had sailed from the Netherlands with a fleet of six ships under Jacob van Neck on June 28, 1600. The fleet split into two on the African Guinea coast. The three ships under the vice-admiral Cornelis van Foreest arrived in Banten, Java, on August 9, 1601. Foreest immediately loaded his ship, the Dordrecht, *with pepper and returned to the Netherlands. Admiral van Neck had arrived in Banten with his three ships before Foreest. Before sailing on to Maluku (the Moluccas), Neck had left Foreest a message ordering him to send two ships to China. Thus the two remaining ships, the* Haerlem *and the* Leyden, *captained by Cornelis Claesz and Hendrik Jansz respectively and with Gaspar Groesbergen as vice-admiral, arrived at the island of Pulo Condore (Đảo Côn Lôn) just off the then Cambodian coast on September 10, 1601. From there they sailed northwards. Before reaching the Champa coast the ships were attacked by the coastal inhabitants and 23 of the Dutch crew were killed. The commander Groesbergen was captured and had to be ransomed with two cannons. Despite these setbacks Wonderaer and Ruyll travelled further north in sloops and junks, searching for trade opportunities.*

Some of the characters to whom Wonderaer refers in this letter will be familiar from the background given above. Some others should be introduced. Lonckey, Loncey, Longay or Loncay, an interpreter, is frequently referred to as 'our black rascal' or just 'our Black'. Toulon was a Vietnamese merchant who was later appointed a mandarin. Honho was probably hired by the Dutch in Banten because he spoke Vietnamese and Malay. Onkay (possibly Ông Cai Bộ) was the Nguyễn king's emissary and treasurer. He was also known as a shrewd merchant and played host to Wonderaer, Ruyll and party. The interpreters representing the Nguyễn king were two elderly women who spoke excellent Portuguese and Malay because they had spent a large part of their life living in Macao as the wives of Portuguese. One had been the king's interpreter for 30 years.

[1] From H.A. Foreest and A. de Booy (eds), *De vierde scheepvart der Nederlanders naar Oost-Indië onder Jacob Wilkens en Jacob van Neck (1599-1604)*, Vol. 2, The Hague, pp. 67-91.

[Dictated to Ruyll] *Laus Deo anno 1602 dated 5th April in Tachem*[2]
Honourable, discrete, very providential Admiral Mr Groesbergen, with all respect and greetings. I last wrote to Your Excellencies at the end of last month, [dictated] through Toulon I believe. The reason I wrote was to inform Y.E.[3] about a certain matter. Since Toulon has not left, and the letter in question will be sent along with the present one, I thought it unnecessary to send you a copy, and I restrict myself to informing Y.E. about what has happened since.

The first day of this month, by clear daylight, there was an enormous fire in two places inside Tachem [Hội An], so that more than 200 houses were burnt down. I leave it to Y.E. to imagine how we felt, hearing the screams of the people, and remembering the fire in Chincheo[4] with what followed and afterwards happened to us. However, thanks be to God, nothing has happened to us up to this moment. The same day our host returned home again from Senoa [Thuận Hóa] in the night; I was woken up, arose and welcomed him asking for news and if he had accomplished anything. He said yes, that he had brought some [pepper] with him; another two men had been left back there to buy more, but he had come ahead in order to inform his majesty of what he had done, and also to do me the honour of informing me. I thanked him and quizzed him on prices; he said that I would hear that the next day when I would be summoned before the king [Nguyễn Hoàng]; that he wanted to rest and I should do likewise, which I did.

Sir, in my communication of the 31st last month, I had written to Y.E. that according to the woman who serves as our interpreter I was going to be summoned by the king, but for your information that did not happen at the time. On the 2nd ditto before noon our host, and also Honho, went before the king; they spoke with him in my absence so I do not know what they talked about with

[2] Tachem appears to be a rendering of Đại Chiêm, an earlier name for the port of Hội An (Faifo).
[3] Your Excellencies. Y.E. will be used henceforth in this translation.
[4] Chincheo appears to refer to Xin Chou, an old name for Quy Nhơn.

each other. After midday, however, I learnt about it, as I was summoned by the king at around 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon. We were presented to him in the usual place where 32 sacks of pepper lay on the verandah. After respectful greetings the king had us sit down. He had me informed that my host had come ahead with the above-mentioned pepper to let me know [in advance], but that two more men had been left back there to buy more; and that I could send the latter [purchases] off along with the first delivery. I respectfully thanked his majesty for the diligence and the trouble he had taken to help us and asked the price for which it had been bought. He gave me the answer that I should inspect the pepper very carefully, which I did; whereupon he had me sit down again and asked how I liked the goods. I answered that I had nothing to remark about the pepper except that it was of a small grain, but if the price was commensurate [with the smallness of the grains] there would not be any delay in receiving and paying for it; that his majesty might wish to let me hear the price in order to let Y.E. know it at the same time that the goods were brought to the ship. He answered: as he was not a merchant, which he had told me more than once, and this was not his usual routine, he would send for the principal merchants of Senoa, who owned most of the pepper, in order to negotiate with me so that I could do business with them, as he did not wish these merchants to complain about his setting the price for them; he thought they would offer a reasonable price and that it seemed there would be enough pepper to load both ships, or not much less than that. And finally — as we still would have to lie here for a while until the wind changed course to take us home again — he thought it best if we took one ship's cargo of the old [last season's pepper], and that we should wait for the remainder till the new [harvest], because since there were many interested parties or buyers for the old [pepper], the merchants charged more for it, and we would be able to get the new much cheaper. I could settle the payment with them for this lot once I was authorized; if I had some money with me now, I should keep that until the merchants from Senoa came [and] if I could work something out with them, I could use the money to pay them because not all of them would bring the same quantity.

I thanked his majesty very much for the diligence he had shown, and [added that I] was prepared to receive these particular goods — including whatever more his majesty was having purchased on our account — and to pay for them at the price his majesty would state, according to my promise to his majesty. Then, because I had not given his majesty a ceiling on the price, and as a consequence of the fact that he had voluntarily offered [to buy] for me, his majesty asked me my final decision on what I wished to pay. Thereupon I answered that my intention

was three and a half *tael*[5] at the most. Nonetheless to show his majesty that we were serious in wanting to buy and finalize the deal and were not just here to explore the trade, a matter on which the king had quizzed me earlier, I said that I would give four *tael* if I could not get it for less, rather than have the purchase fail. I had not wanted to say that earlier to any merchant, nor would a merchant have demanded to know my ultimate price yet, because that is not businesslike. In answer his majesty said that he would prove to be our friend, and he would buy a lot for us in the assurance that he could buy cheaper than we could, to which [I replied that] I hoped his majesty had already done so and if his majesty would now be willing to let me know the price, he would do me a great favour so that I would know how to put things in order. And this could not be disadvantageous to the merchants, because if they did not wish to sell, they would keep their goods, and if they held the price too dear we kept our money. But I would always demonstrate to the merchants that I wished to buy. Considering his majesty's advice and not thinking it inexpedient, I thanked him, because if we would take a ship's cargo of the old [pepper] for a reasonable price, only time would tell, which is something Y.E. would also advise.

[I said that] I had the intention to make payments immediately, if his majesty would be pleased to let me know the price, as I believed I had the authority to buy. [I added that] I was most grateful to his majesty, since it pleased his majesty to show me his friendship, letting me hold on to my money so that I could see to negotiations with other merchants first without being short of ready money. [I repeated the point that] I could give orders and write to Y.E. for authority to satisfy and pay his majesty straight away for such an amount as his majesty would state. Thereupon he said to me again that I should prefer to talk about the price first with the merchants who would be there in two or three days, and as regards the payment he was content that it be done in the way that suited me after he had let me know the price. [He added] he knew we would pay him even if he demanded ten *tael*, but preferred that we should decline, and asked me if we had weights to receive and weigh [the pepper]. I answered his majesty that even if he were not disposed to tell us the price of the pepper now, as soon as he did I would always be authorized to receive it and send it off to Y.E. As regards weights I said we had none; that in the lands of other rulers it was not our custom to receive goods using our own scales or even in terms of our country's weights. Rather we were happy to buy using the scales of the country in which we traded, and thus we would be satisfied with the weights used in his majesty's lands, assuming that the weights of his country were the same as those in China, having 100 *kati* to the *pikul*. He said this was the case and he would send us a

[5]Presumably 3.5 *tael* (132 grams) of silver per *pikul*.

Portuguese balance to our house; after this he had fruit and arrack brought again, telling us that we should eat, drink and be merry.

We thanked his majesty very much. He began a lengthy discourse on what the Portuguese had said about us, our country and our religion, to which we responded as our knowledge and circumstances allowed, which seemed to given him great pleasure. Sir, to write this all down would take too long and bore Y.E. If the Lord blesses us and we are safe and sound together, I will inform Y.E. orally because it lasted at least one hour. From all that was said I have to tell Y.E. this: as we were talking with him about [the Portuguese] idol-worship and adoration of statues and crucifixes, he asked if we had not seen those crucifixes on the roads, and we said yes. So he related to us that one of his servants equipped with a firearm had shot at a bird which he saw sitting on a crucifix, but had missed the bird and instead blown part of the crucifix off. Immediately the priests had come to him to complain about it, saying that [the culprit] was doomed and would die ignominiously; that he ought to punish [the culprit] for having fired at the Holy Cross. He asked us about what sort of a thing was this crucifix which [the Portuguese] said to have so much power, and what its origin was; if it had come from heaven and if our men were also equally afraid of that thing and equally beholden by crucifixes. Thereupon I answered him that we were no idolators or icon-worshippers, but that we believed in the one true God, who had created and made from nothing the sky, the earth and the sea with all that they contain. Him alone we worshipped and prayed to, as well as the one who had died on the cross for our salvation — so I extended the explanation with more words to which he patiently listened — but that those crosses had no power, nor did we like them. It is true that we liked crosses very much and we did much to obtain them, but these were crosses minted on coins. As regards the crosses of wood or stone erected for idolatry, our people were pulling them down as they were defilements. However, if there was a restraining order when our ships arrived in Thoulon,[6] our people would not attempt to do such a thing in his majesty's country. Thereupon he laughed and gave this reply. Of course he knew the crucifixes did not have the power ascribed to them. The very fellow who had shot [at the crucifix] was also still alive and had not died an ignominious death, and if our people had no fear of dying they could pull down the crucifixes as they liked; he freely gave his consent on the matter.

Sir, I have written this only as an interlude because it was humorous; he was very friendly towards us, and at last gave us permission to leave. After we went home he immediately sent the 32 bags of pepper to our place, and also gave us a bag of rice along with a pig and two pots of arrack; also 1,000 cash for Gerrit to

[6]Turon, i.e. Đà Nẵng.

buy medicinal herbs; and he informed us that although he had not sent us anything for some days because we had been in Thoulon [Đà Nẵng], he had not forgotten us. When I wanted to protest [about the gifts], Honho and the Portuguese women who were at our house said that I should not do that but accept them, because the king would otherwise take offence. However, if I wanted to do something I should make a small gift to the bearer, who was the overseer of the king's footboys, and to the carriers. This the king would appreciate as if the gift was coming to him; so I did this, especially because I had not given anything on any previous occasion.

In the evening over dinner my host asked me if I wanted to receive the pepper the next day. I said yes, he should deliver it if it suited him and he wanted to, but I wasn't yet ready to load it because I didn't know the price. [I added that] I intended to wait a further day or two, until I had found out if I could make a deal on an additional lot and have the whole lot transferred together. If I knew what the price in Senoa was I could adjust myself accordingly, if it suited him [to tell me]. He said that he could indeed tell me and at last he did, informing me that he had bought it for fifteen thousand cash, which is six *tael*.[7] When I heard that, I slumped as if I had been knocked on the head. At last I asked if that was the market price. He said yes, at which I responded that I intended to go to his majesty the next morning and thank him for the all the goods, beseeching him not to buy any more at such a price for it was of no use to me at all; I would receive what had been bought and pay his majesty according to my promises. I was very upset. At this he said to me, 'There are still two men back there buying more, and I have placed orders to buy 30 or 40 *pikul*. On behalf of the king I have also told all the principal merchants to come down here with their goods, so how should things proceed?' I said, 'As regards what the king has bought I am obliged to him; I shall receive and pay for the lot his majesty was talking about and which was bought on our account. But I am not bound to anyone else, because I have not requested you or anybody else to buy for me, only his majesty. If his majesty has sent you out, you know what the commission is, I do not; also when you say that you have had the merchants come down with their goods, that was not on my orders, because I have not given such commands. However, as they are coming, I acquiesce to trade with them subject to their willingness to give their goods for a reasonable price. If we cannot come to an agreement they would not be cheated [by me], but could keep their goods and we our wares and money.'

[7]Foreest and de Booy point out in a footnote that this was quite a reasonable price by the prevailing standards, but that Wonderaer had been anticipating a significantly lower price between two and a half and three *tael* per *pikul*.

To be brief, my host became angry and started to say, 'Is that the thanks for my diligence which I have shown by staying away from home for six days, travelling day and night?' Then he added, 'I have received you in my house as my brother and shown you all possible friendship. The king has given me [only] ten silver *tael* for my troubles, so things shouldn't change now.' I told him that I pleaded with him not to upset himself because I did not give him any reason to do so; I did not deprive him of his rights and I was willing and ready to give him something for his enterprise and diligence as I had promised, as well as for his friendship and the reception in his house. Whatever the king had given him was none of my business, but before I was leaving his house I hoped to satisfy him to the extent that he could not say that an ungrateful person had been received or had stayed in his house. [I added] that I did not want to make stupid or worthless business deals for his or anybody's sake; I was old enough to see things and ensure that I would not be abused as someone's servant who worked for nothing. Even though we were simple looking and open-hearted, we had not been sent out as children, rather we hoped we knew our business as well as others who came with great pomp and pride; as we did not want to cheat anyone, but to behave peacefully and upright, we could not afford to let ourselves fall asleep. In short, Sir, I also raised my voice, the more so because Honho was present, as also was Toulon who I was very surprised to see still there that day, for I thought he was on his way to Chincheo for the purposes which I had advised Y.E. on the 31st of last month. Then that evening everything came to light concerning the part played by our black rascal in all his manipulations and consultations which have so often amounted to a conspiracy, as I have so often complained to Y.E. in my letters. For the following plot had been hatched: our black rogue had made them wise of the market price in Banten, informing them how much we receive for the goods there and that we definitely would buy; and [suggesting] that since the buying price was low here, they should try to get a commission from the sales, and divide the spoils among themselves, by quoting a price that would reap an enormous profit. But because I am now here myself, there is no way that Toulon and Honho could realize the scheme themselves. Thus they have enlisted the assistance of the principal merchants, to wit my host who is an important merchant as I have heard the king say, together with another one who, as I wrote Y.E., sailed with me to Thoulon [Đà Nẵng]. Moreover my host had obtained permission from the king to sail to Senoa, where he has concocted a cunning plot of which Y.E. will hear in due course. Now those cheats were all in a quandary when they heard me tell them that I would ask the king to dispatch a man, at my expense, to stop the two men who were still there from buying at such a price. None of them said a word except the host. Indeed Loncey had already given me reason for suspicion that day, because just like Toulon he had come to us that

very day — which, as I just wrote to Y.E., had surprised me. When I asked [Toulon] the reason why he had not gone, he answered that he was still deliberating as to whether he wanted to go to Senoa, because it was not as bad at home as he had thought. So then Lonckey came and told me that he intended to go with Toulon to Chincheo the next day and from there sail onwards to board a ship. I asked what he had to do there; he said he had nothing to do either here or there, but I could avail myself of the woman [interpreter] so he was not necessary to me. I answered, without antagonizing him, that if he wanted to go it was all right with me; but I had an inkling that there was more to this affair than met the eye. All that which I have recounted happened in the evening. They all went home, but very early in the morning of the 3rd they were already together again planning and consulting with each another: the host, Toulon, Honho, our Black, and the little Chinaman who had brought the rice aboard our ship for Honho. They heaved sighs and did not know how to deal with things because they could see that all their plans had fallen through.

To summarize, the host asked me what would be my highest bid and Honho too came up to me especially to ask my lowest bid. But I answered them individually that I would not be buying since they had told me the price was six *tael*; I neither wanted to buy at that price nor wished to tell anyone my highest offer. I would pay for whatever I received from the king; when that was done I would ask permission from the king to take leave with the ships and look for gain elsewhere without wasting any time. When they could see that they could not get anything out of me, Honho said that I could have the pepper of the king weighed, receive it, and take it and myself to the ship; and that he wanted to come too and receive the king's money on the king's behalf. I [retorted] that I had promised the king not to leave the country before I had paid everyone; moreover I wanted to pay his majesty myself and at the same time bring him [those goods] which he wanted from us; and thus comply with my promises to everybody before my departure. With that [Honho] got his dismissal. The king came to know of all this, through whom I do not know, but Honho soon came to say that I had to come before the king at once. I sent for the woman [interpreter] straight away and immediately went to the usual place where, after respectful greetings, we were told to sit down. He asked me what I thought of the pepper and how it pleased me. I answered that the pepper would do very well and it pleased me, so if only the price could satisfy me equally well, everything would be fine. [I continued that] since I had heard that the price was 15,000 cash [six *tael*], it was a high price, too dear for us, which promised no profit. I wanted to thank his majesty very much for all the friendship and favours he had shown us; I would receive the pepper which his majesty had organized for us and pay his majesty for it according to my promise, but implored his majesty not to let any more be bought

for us at such a price. Thereupon he asked me who had proposed that price for his goods to me. I answered that nobody had proposed any price for his majesty's goods, but that [the pepper] had been bought in Senoa for six *tael* and when I had heard the news, it saddened me, because for this reason we would have to leave and look for our profit elsewhere, something which gave us no pleasure; but what will be will be [I said], we must have patience. He said in his turn not to worry; my host had spoken as the merchant he was, one who likes to gain a lot; but things would not happen that way. [The king continued] I was staying in [Onkay's] house, ate his rice and drank his water, which is why he thought he should extract a little more profit from me. Senoa merchants were due to come and I should speak with them before deciding what to do, and [in the meantime] I should have the pepper weighed and sent aboard. He wanted Y.E. to send the promised gifts aboard a small prahu only after the ships had reached Thoulon because it was not worth the trouble of sending the gifts from so far out [at sea]. I said that I was not worried and trusted his majesty's word; as regards my host it was all right with me if he might make a profit on us, better him than someone else, as long as he also let us enjoy ours; if he was to have the meat we were happy to have the skin, but if things continued as beforehand we would scarcely get to gnaw on the bones. He again said he thought it would be better that we send off this lot and talk to the merchants, and then permitted us to return home. Our host had not been present.

After returning home I found Toulon who had me informed that he would not be going to Chincheo, but to Senoa for pepper, and deliver it at the price for which the king would give it to me. I answered him not to do that because I did not want it, rather he should save himself the trouble of travelling. He should give me the money which he owed; I had to pay the king, and therefore I had to have the money. He started to look abashed, but at last said that as regards the money he owed me, he would give me the half which he kept here, the rest being in Chincheo; after which he left in moans. Honho came again trying to have me specify the limit which I would be willing to hand over. To cut a long story short, in the end I told him that I would give three and a half *tael* and no more, yet if it had to be four I thought I would not pass it up, but certainly no more; he was left with [that price]. Immediately after that Albert Cornelisz Ruyll came to see me, reporting Honho's words to the effect that as he had received many favours from Y.E., to a degree unmatched by what he had received from the Chinese, and hoped [these favours] would continue, and as the highest profits best availed him because he had a large family with many needs, he wanted to render us service and assistance in good faith. If we did not want to buy we should tell him so, because then he had to take care to keep in with the Chinese, for something was better than nothing.

Sir, by now I had concluded from all the foregoing that they had planned to share the spoils among themselves, intending to make me believe what they wanted. That is why they loaned money so readily to our Black who not only gives his woman gold and silver bracelets and one dress after another, but also buys rhinoceros horns, and daily holds banquets before and after meals so that he is drunk practically every day: who moreover is daily with whores, first one and then another, with whom he does nothing but quarrel and shout such that it is a downright embarrassment, so bad that I cannot describe it to Y.E. So the deal is not going to my liking and instead I am tortured by these characters. Nonetheless I must keep up my pluck for doing business, because I find that the more I keep a cool head, the better the deal they give me.

In summary, I emphasized to Honho his awareness of what we were like, what he had got from us, and what we could still give him if he served us properly; and that he should be thankful. He then said to me that if I agreed, he thought it advisable to send a man secretly to Senoa to find out its market price for pepper, taking a little money and buying a small lot so that it would appear to be for the Chinese and they would not even think of us. And if we could indeed buy for three or three and a half *tael*, or at the most four since I did not want him to get it for more, then we could shut the mouth of our host who he said was such a great merchant in the king's eyes; at the same time we would find out how I had to conduct myself with those Senoa merchants. I have approved all this and given him 30 *tael* [either] to buy eight or ten *pikul* at the price just mentioned or, if not [available at that price], to return immediately and refund me the money, which he has promised me to do. I also begged him to keep it all quiet, which I sought as much as he did, and so a man has been sent off. Toulon has also left for there without sending me the money. I asked Loncey who had made him so audacious as to leave without paying or telling me. He answered that he had not so advised him, but that Toulon had gone on his own initiative, saying he hoped to bring pepper for four *tael* and if not he would return the money; he had gone, and I could not do anything about it.

In the evening I was told by the Portuguese woman that she had heard from the wives of the king that they had spoken in our favour before the king. They had said there was no reason why the king should allow such good people as we were, who had come from such far-away countries, to be treated this way by trying to sell us goods so much more expensively than to people from other nations. At this the king had given a positive answer that he would take care [of us]. I could believe that because not an hour later one of the maids of the queen came with a pot of *reunep* [*rượu nếp*], or sticky-rice alcohol, like we used to have in Oncon's place, offered to me on behalf of the [king's wives]. I thanked her very much saying I did not deserve it, also that I had no means to repay her and

show our gratitude, but I accepted in gratefulness, saying that I hoped to compensate her before my departure. Sir, this [event] and that which I have related above have renewed my courage, because Honho and Toulon no longer say that it is pointless expecting [them] to deliver for four *tael*. They already know it is either the eggs or the chickens; now that they see the big catch has escaped them they look for the small fry, before they have lost both.

Today, Sir, I witnessed yet another trick of my host when I saw him carry a bag of pepper from the house, along with a balance and a weight, prompting me to think he might want to change the weight. During the meal I told the Portuguese woman to ask the host if one *pikul* was not the same as 100 *kati* here. He answered yes: I asked again if there were not 16 *tael* to one *kati*;[8] he looked up at me and asked who had told me that. I said I knew it and asked him if it was not correct; he said that he did not know about *tael*, but then asked me again who had told me. I asked him who did he take me for, did he think I was a child and is that why he planned to deal with the pepper as he was doing, thinking that I would believe anything they told me. He said he did not have that in mind. [I said] even though we appeared simple and we spoke our hearts, we knew our job, thanks be to God, and how to trade as well as anyone else. Our country did not send out children or fools to trade with others; moreover I was quite old and, thanks to God, my grey hair had given me experience in trading [long] before we had come to this place. I knew the weights and prices of pepper in general use from our texts. If I were on board ship, I could show him hundreds of different weights in a book. If we did not know such things, we would not be worthy to call ourselves merchants.

To summarize, I blustered at him so that he sat as stiff as a plank. This profited us 10 *kati* per *pikul*, which is what he would have cheated us if I had not found out. He said nothing to me directly, but the woman came up to me to complain, saying that he had furiously scolded her and charged her with telling us that 16 *tael* equalled one *kati* — of which he wrongly accused her — and then told her that her action had profited us greatly.

On the 4th ditto we received the pepper: 32 bags weighing 2,966 *kati*; tare for each bag 2 *kati*; net weight 2,902 *kati* [1.8 tonnes]. Sir, it being a pre-sale, I cannot write the price to Y.E. yet, but I herewith send the invoice individually listing each bag and its weight; also, each bag is marked with the letter C which means received from the king. I have done this in case I might buy some more, so that [the marked bags] can be distinguished in case some cheating becomes

[8] In footnotes to this passage and the next paragraph, Foreest and de Booy explain that an error must have arisen during dictation and Wonderaer must have meant 16 *kati* to one *tael*. However, 16 *tael* (37.8 grams) do indeed amount to 605 grams or one *kati*.

apparent when they are emptied out. Y.E. may like to calculate how the weights measure up and what their *pikul* proves to be; also whether or not Y.E. can confirm the tare, so I can take the appropriate steps. I have loaded these 32 bags into a prahu under the charge of . . . [missing]; if something is wet in there, would Y.E. please inform me, for it should be delivered dry and in good condition.

Y.E. ought not to pay for the freight, because I have to pay for it at this end; they have claimed five pieces of eight [Spanish reals], and seven eaters [crew] must be fed. I have sped the delivery so that Y.E. would be able to examine it well, calculate the weight and test the tare, and enlighten me at once. Honho has weighed this all himself and couldn't notice anything except that it had the correct weight. I had intended to stay over another day, in the hope that I could still make some additions because I was told that a merchant had come from Senoa with ten or twelve bags. Coming about evening time, it was a man and a woman, and the woman did the talking while the man listened and agreed. When they came to our house, I was told that an important merchant woman of Senoa was here, so I went to see her. She said that she had come here at the king's desire with some bags of pepper as a small sample, and if we could come to an agreement she was able to deliver a large quantity at once. Altogether they were two sisters and one brother who were able to deliver a good quantity. I answered that if we could come to an agreement, I would take what they had brought along with whatever quantity they could deliver, on the condition that I liked it, and [also] that rather than deal with many I preferred to deal with one person — if that person was found to be fair — and when I had received everything I would pay cash, or if tradegoods pleased them more then tradegoods would be delivered. Thereupon she said that she had come from the uplands with a small sample in order to find out what I would offer her, and on hearing that it would suffice then she would bring down a good quantity, so could I please say what I would want to give for it. I demanded to know if that was the way to negotiate in her country, explaining that our way of doing things was not so, and that I doubted if she were so ignorant as to imagine that if I wanted to sell her several lakens[9] or other wares, she would tell me what she would give for them before I had told her the selling price. [I went on] that we should not try to catch the other asleep, she had come to sell and I had come to buy; that I would have thought we had both reached the same age, I with grey hair and she too; and so if she knew how to play her role in the negotiations, I permitted myself the luxury of thinking I knew a little too because I had also seen the world in my time. She looked at me, the man was completely silent without saying one word; at last she made a long speech which in the end came to the point that other nations bought for ten *tael*; but since it was wares and tradegoods

[9] A European woollen cloth.

which she received as payment in these cases, she was willing — since I would give here cash — to deliver for eight *tael* even though the wares she had accepted were as good for her as cash.

I asked her if that was her last price and she said yes; I answered her that I thought she was playing games with me or took me for a fool, that I could play that game with her too, yet I respected her for her age and her person. And even though I looked simple in her eyes and not all pomp and pride like the Portuguese, with whom she had traded many times, I hoped to satisfy her and everyone with whom I traded so that nobody would have any complaints. And although I thanked her for the trouble she had taken to come here, at that price her goods were not for me; nor did I think that my money was for her as long as she kept on babbling. Thus we took leave from each other, for she did not want to change her tune, and I did not want to make an offer lest they keep thinking we were cornered into taking the pepper, which is what they had made her and others believe. So I kept my cool, and it was enough to know that there was still much old pepper in the country. The king's barber, who had seen me with the woman, had explained to Gerrit how he had seen and heard them talking with the king; when the king asked them how much pepper they had, they answered that they had brought little with them but trusted they could deliver a ship's cargo. But he had not heard any price mentioned, and the new crop is also at hand and will start to be picked within six weeks. Even though it is said that it does not look promising, nonetheless I do not believe it, rather I am more inclined to believe the opposite. But I think it is not wise to rush in and expose myself by making higher bids, given the consequences it might have.

I do not doubt all will be straightened out, but first I will just have to leave here for a while and return to the ships, acting as if my departure were in earnest. I do not doubt that they would then give a better price. However, let the ships first come within operating distance, which is necessary if we want to trade. Firstly, in order to evaluate the dangers of sailing those prahus out to sea, because the consequences of any accidents shall be our responsibility, for no one here would want to answer for the risks involved as it is such a long trip and the change of the monsoon has begun. Besides that, because I need to be provided with cash since they want to receive their money on shore. They frankly tell us that because our people have suffered so much, they fear we will take our revenge on them, which is why they want to hand over their goods and receive their money here. Accordingly I must continually have a thousand pieces of eight on hand, so every time I send off a barque with pepper it should return with the load replaced by another instalment of money. This can all be organized without danger, for if the barque sails off in the morning it can be at the ship in the evening, and as long as two of the best sailors are held in readiness to sail continually back and forth

guarding first the goods and then the money, we would not have to risk any more on each occasion. The afore-mentioned sums represent a small capital risk given that we jeopardize our lives if we wish to trade. Thirdly [why the ships should come close], the expenses to lay out would not be so high; and fourthly, we would be so much nearer to each other and able to advise each other through short daily messages. Fifthly and finally, the ships would be much closer when we have to sail away; it is good mooring here [at Đà Nẵng], with provisioning of victuals as good as [in Chincheo], and if they are right in saying it is deep enough to enter — a point which the navigators should examine — then it would be easier to leave from here than from Chincheo. However, I do not want to write much on the latter because I am completely ignorant about such things. So my advice on whether the ships should come in is as I have written to Y.E. Y.E. might want to discuss it and let me know your opinion as soon as possible so that I know what steps to take. And Y.E. should not forget to send me a supply of money, unless it is already arranged, so that if needs be I can satisfy the king for [the pepper bought from him] as related above, or so that nobody can say a bad word against us if I must begin the motions of leaving, which would also test whether he would indeed let us depart (as advised).

On the morning of 5th ditto the merchant woman from Senoa came to me again and, after many words, at last came to the point that I should make her a bid; even if it was only two *tael* she would not mind. This I did after explaining that I did not want to make fun of her, but would make her a bid as a merchant should who has decided to buy, indeed as much or more than the price was before we arrived. I offered her three and a half *tael*, adding that if she would raise it to four she would have to await my response, and that they had no right to try and catch us napping. Not long afterwards the Portuguese woman came to me, telling me that the king had summoned her and sent her to ask me whether this was my final decision or would I be prepared to go up to five *tael*; for even though he had spoken to the merchant woman from Senoa, it could not be done for four *tael*. I answered that I regretted it deeply that his majesty had taken so much trouble for my sake, and thanked him for all the good deeds he had shown us; that I realized the sale was not to take place because I did not intend to give more, as indeed I had already said to his majesty on an earlier occasion. She has passed this on to the king but I have not received an answer yet. She said that the merchant woman had already returned to her home. I answered that it was good, I also hoped to leave soon for my home, the ships, once I had paid his majesty. The woman from Senoa had explained that among other [reasons for leaving] she had two large houses full of pepper which she had had to leave unattended. It was satisfying to hear from her the same thing I had heard from the barber. To offer more, Sir, I did not think wise, for had I exposed myself that far, it would have been enough

for them, since they had not offered me any reduction but rather insisted on hearing what my last price was. Anyway, after asking to be excused I stood up, saying that I had some writing and preparations to do, so that I could leave after receiving a written reply from Y.E. and after paying the king.

Today I have been busy writing this. Towards evening the king sent his musicians saying they should entertain us, together with two of his courtiers. Fearing I might make him angry I dared not refuse, but God knows with what reluctance I watched on. For my heart was heavy with worries, in that I also had to watch the manipulations and undermining actions of our black rascal without being able to oppose them, not to mention the way these rogues torment me with their whores such that I often cannot eat or drink. Here in the house our Black is respected as he has never been before; it is Loncay with the host before and afterwards; he is served his own table inside like a gentleman; he eats his servings of poultry which I do not do, I let myself be served with whatever is given, but him it seems they fear as a lord. Everyday he is drunk, walking wherever he likes without taking any notice of me. I refrain from saying anything to his face, rather my complaints and outbursts are directed at Ruyll; if I did not have him it would be a double burden, but at least this relieves me a bit. Sir, I will play him a trick, which neither he nor any of his accomplices suspect. He is here of no use to me, only plaguing me and being an obstruction to the Company; indeed such a great obstruction I am sure that if we did not have this rascal, we would have already secured most of our cargo for four *tael* or less. As things stand this goal will cause us considerable trouble and may possibly fall through altogether. So I have the intention, since he has asked me earlier if he could sail back to the ship as he has nothing to do here, to send him off with this pepper, putting him in charge of guarding it. I will tell him the deal has fallen through, as he can see; that Gerrit is ill and so I can spare him long enough for him to go along; he could accompany the ships as one of the two pilots, given that he has observed the gap; I shall manipulate him with these sweet words. But I pray Y.E., when he arrives, please do not send him back unless I ask for him; nor shall I recall him before it is time to sail away, so that he cannot conspire with his compatriots. He will not have any trouble with his mistress either because she walked out of the house two days ago, carrying away everything he had except the golden ring. I leave it to Y.E. to imagine what kind of discipline has been followed here, much to my regret. Sir, this will also be the opportunity to find out how he is in league with all these characters, depending on what new tidings they offer — especially Toulon after he returns from Senoa, but also Honho, and also the man who we sent out (as I advised Y.E. above) after he returns. I hope to find out soon exactly what was concocted. But first I will ask the king for permission, because I have promised

that I will not leave from here with my men before all their keep has been paid for, so that I should not trespass in any way, as advised.

Sir, this morning, 6th of this month, there came another person, said to be a great merchant and reportedly invited by the king, to see if we could do business. I consider it unnecessary to relate all that was discussed, but it concluded thus: I wanted to know his price, he offered ten *tael*, I answered that I hoped for his sake he manages to sell at that price, but it would not be to me. My host grandstanded the event and did all the speaking, such that I felt he had prearranged it all, he who handles the king's business with the merchants. Unmoved, I gave short answers to everything, thanked the merchant for the trouble which he said he had gone to, and continued to write. Sir, their game is surely as follows; because of what our black rascal tells them, they think we must have the pepper and will not let the purchase fall through. So it looks inevitable that I should just leave this place after I have satisfied the king and everyone else. I have written above to Y.E. my opinion and advice to the effect that the ships be allowed to come here to Thoulon [Đa Nẵng], but now my advice would be that the ships first lie at or below the island of Champello [Cù Lao Chàm]. I will spread the news that the ships are waiting there to take me on board — of course on the understanding that Y.E. approve — in order to see how they will react, whether or not they will change their mind; indeed I will even come aboard and sail with those ships to Thoulon if that seems the best thing to do. We shall then discover two important things. Firstly, if the king should let us go freely and uncontested, and has no designs over our ships, for I am not without suspicion. However, I have not actually noticed or discovered any occasion that should give me cause for distrust, because I cannot remember any changes in the reception accorded to us despite everything that has happened. Secondly, how the king and the merchants will react when they see that we are serious about leaving; as usual I await Y.E.'s decision about this at your earliest convenience.

Sir, just when I thought to end this letter, leaving Albert Cornelisz seated and writing, I came downstairs and saw all the pepper standing there, and our host and Honho seated and playing while the Black looked on. I asked why the pepper had not been carried to the prahu. Honho answered that there was no prahu. I asked how could that be; had I not rented a prahu for five pieces of eight? He then said yes, but the king did not want it to be sent for another three days yet, because more would be added. When I heard that I was very downcast and fearful, not knowing how to interpret it, because in such situations the worst comes to one's mind. Altogether I was so apprehensive that I could not eat or drink, thinking we might be trapped in the same game again, and that they were holding us up as they planned an attack on the ships.

While I was in this state of anxiety, the Portuguese woman, who I had sent to the king to ask permission to send Loncey aboard, brought me the answer. [More than simply approving], the king asked if it was not me who commanded my people; I could send them wherever I like, I did not have to ask him. I complained to her about what had happened, that I had wanted to send the pepper but had been told the king did not want the pepper to be sent for another three days, and now I did not know what to make of it. She said she would go to the king towards evening time and ask him about it and bring me his answer, which she did. She came that evening and told me the king was very unhappy with Honho for having told such lies, because he had not said those things; that he did not know whether the pepper had already been sent to the boats or if a further 16 *pikul* had been added. Further he would call for me in the morning to arrange reception of the goods and to speak with me. Whatever happens, I will write and inform Y.E. tomorrow. She also told me that the host had requested the king to price the pepper for me at six *tael*, but this the king had refused, saying that under no circumstances would he allow the host to sell me the pepper above the market price; yet I still do not know what price he will ask of me. But as regards the price at which the Chinese buy — as I heard today from Honho's little slave who was captured with him on the ship and speaks Malay — they give 14, 15 or 16,000 cash at the most, that is in exchange for their tradegoods which they sell here and in Senoa; and they claim 3,000 cash to the *tael*, while recouping approximately half their outlay through their goods, so that the pepper costs them no more than 6,000 cash.[10] Whatever I explain to these mules about such things, they refuse to understand. He also disclosed how our Black mingles with the Chinese and related their conversations which he had overheard, to wit 'We are brothers and ought to support each other, we can unite our forces and be of service to each other every year; those Hollanders are foreigners, possibly you could be earning a little more over the long run', and more such talk, by which means he snares his money which is so important to him. Indeed I have even heard that if he still had 40 or 50 pieces of eight of his money he would attempt to make us lose our footing, something which he now sees he has no chance of doing, but which he surely had intended. However, the damage which he has caused the Company could not be compensated even by a fine of a hundred thousand guilders in our country. Because if we had not had him, surely we would already be loaded at this hour, mostly for four *tael*, while now I am afraid

[10] 15,000 cash is of course the price originally asked of Wonderaer by his host. Here he seems to have calculated as follows: around 15,000 cash at an exchange rate of 3,000 is 5 *tael*, but since the Chinese pay in tradegoods with a hundred per cent mark-up they really pay only 2.5 *tael*, which converted back to cash at his exchange rate of 2,500 comes to 6,250 or approximately 6,000 cash.

we shall not be able to buy for less than five *tael*, referring to the old crop. And even if we bought only 6,000 *pikul*, that is 9,000 pieces of eight [more than we should be paying],[11] and if pepper is to be bought for that, one can work out how much we have been betrayed. So [I feel] that even if the rascal had been hung long ago, not much that's desirable would have been lost, because better people who have not deserved it one tenth as much have been hanged. So it looks like I will have to trifle away a real [per *pikul*] in order to close the deal.

Sir, in case Toulon boards the ship with pepper from Senoa without passing by here first, please do not accept it for more than four *tael*, because he has promised to deliver it for that price, and yet he is so nefarious that he could just ignore his promise and see if he might get more from Y.E. Should that happen it would have a flush of consequences, because he has his allies here who would immediately receive the news and stick to their prices more stubbornly. I hope all may still turn out well for what I have offered, or a little more, because Honho has just told me if I was prepared to give five *tael*, he thought that I would be able to have almost all the pepper there was. I answered no, for when I heard that, I rightly detected that the Chinese already must have most of what they wanted, because before that they had been so stubborn as never to have demanded less than eight *tael* from me.[12] I have also heard here that the merchants from Senoa, who had wanted to leave immediately as I was given to understand, are still here. So I hope that they calm down and get down to business because if it comes to the worst we will give five *tael* for the old [crop] or three and a half for the new, I hope, and we will not be lacking [pepper cargo]. Our host is also starting to offer us a better price now he has heard that I intend to leave as soon as I have settled with the king, so that I hope everything will turn out for the better. To my mind, it cannot do any harm that the ships come closer as soon as possible for the reasons indicated above. Honho has also told me that he wants to accompany [the king's] pepper, along with one of his wives who wants to buy silk from the Chinese, and he has 200 bags of rice, so he says, which he would like to sell to Y.E. I think he hadn't yet come round to agreeing, or he wanted to see if I would not bid higher for the pepper, to explain why he held back the king's pepper, making me believe what I have described above; I think he will be scolded by the king tomorrow. I will know tomorrow and receive the other pepper from the king which has now arrived, and send it off at once with the other 32 bags and Loncey with it; well may Y.E. welcome him, because some jolly company is coming on board.

[11] i.e. one *tael* (37.8 grams) reckoned as equivalent to one and a half pieces of eight (25.5 grams).

[12] Here Wonderaer seems to have forgotten that the original asking price was six *tael*.

Sir, on the 7th ditto the king has sent me another 16 bags of pepper weighing 1,658 gross, tare 32, leaving 1,626 *kati* net [1 tonne], as per the invoice and the weight marked on each bag. The king let me know that I should send those away immediately and that within six or seven days a further 100 *pikul* will be available. He has not summoned me this morning, although I had expected him to, the reason being that it rained here last night so that the early morning was refreshing and cool, and he has gone out riding for enjoyment; if he shall [summon me] in the evening, time will tell. Sir, because of the postponed delivery of the goods I have become increasingly aware [of one thing]: while I still have hopes that the price offered by me will be accepted, they — meaning my host and his consorts — think they will still get a higher offer from me and if not from me — and they won't — they will come and request it politely from Y.E. And for that reason I suspect that Honho is coming along under the cover of selling rice, but Y.E. will soon find out by whether he indeed brings rice or rather fails to deliver it. Therefore, Sir, I request that Y.E. refer to me and do not offer him a higher bid than I have offered; tell him that Y.E. gave me orders what to do and this is what Y.E. wanted me to get done, and since I cannot accomplish it, Y.E. have commanded me to come aboard again.

I hope they will start to sing another tune, and I hope to regain what our Black and his followers have tried to make us lose. I have no doubt that my host is the cause for the king's not having given me a price yet, by impressing on him that he ought to favour his subjects, and that we would eventually raise our bid to six *tael*, such that his majesty should delay a little longer. For he is a merchant steeped in wickedness, albeit in the sense of crafty rather than mean; and a man who, if he could cream [more profit] from his costs through the weights used or by any other means, would not refrain from doing so. I hope to be prepared [against that exigency], because I keep the scale which the king loaned me in my room. And when my host and Honho said that the weight was too big and that there was a smaller one — but by analogy with the false weights the Chinese use in Banten it would shave 10 *kati* off per *pikul* — I frankly told them I would take receipt of everything I buy with no scale other than mine, the one I had referred to in their presence before the king, on the occasion when I had said that I would be satisfied with such a weight as in customary use in his majesty's country, like the one his majesty had previously sent me. The king, Sir, according to the woman, means well with us, although he would not want to rebuff his merchants; he therefore waits to see if they can come to an agreement with me before he tells me the price at which he made his purchase. Indeed I should think that the larger part of the pepper which I shall receive in the name of the king belongs to my host, and since the latter is held in high esteem by the king, he would always be ready to sell [the king] a set amount or quantity for five *tael*. For I am sure that the king

will not charge me more than five *tael*, because the woman has told me how the first queen told her that the king has totally rejected the six *tael* which the host wanted, saying that he will not tolerate a markup on the goods beyond what the host has indicated as the buying price. And as mentioned above if we want to or have to pay five, there will be no shortage of [pepper] as advised.

Sir, do not give too much credence to what Honho has to say, because he is smart but too much bent on advancing himself; always keep up appearances with him as Y.E. have always done, because we have to keep up pretences like I do here with our host. We [the host and I] are very good friends, and he has requested from me two or three *lb.* [1 or 1.5 kg] of ammunition which he wants to pay for. I ask Y.E. to be so kind as to send it, because it is a small thing but can create a lot of goodwill. Would Y.E. also please prepare a statement, as soon as possible, on what these 48 *pikul* should cost, and send me the means to pay. But do not mention it to Honho, because I want to hear from the mouth of his majesty himself the price that he will set, and afterwards pay the person whom his majesty will appoint for me, because I do not trust these characters. I long to hear from Y.E. for I have heard nothing; I am also longing after the goods because as long as they are not here, specifically to use as gifts, I shall not get the welcome from those close to the king which I would wish for when I come to court. The Chinese exploit this principle very skilfully; the first thing they do is enter with their presents, and as they say the first candles which light the way are the best.[13] They [the Chinese] have indeed reaped a profit from [the practice], and I only hope that [our lack of presents until now] harms us little, for there has to be something here in order to establish friendships. The queen has also asked me for blue and green glass; I referred her to the arrival of the ships, [saying] that if we traded here I hoped some of our goods could be brought ashore for sale, and that whatever there is that delights her would be hers; she has offered to pay. The last letter of the 31st of last month I have already sent to Y.E. Honho has told me that it was delivered; I hope that indeed it reached Y.E.

Sir, I enclose with this to Y.E. the piece of yellow laken together with the short-bladed knife, because these were returned by the king, as well as the morion[14] which he is also giving back to Y.E., because he has no use for any of them. I send Y.E. my hearty greetings, may Sr Pieter Lourensz and all friends be with the grace of God Almighty; may Y.E. oblige me by passing on my well wishes to them.

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[13] This idiom would seem to emphasise the importance of establishing good first impressions.
[14] A visor-less helmet worn during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Dated 7th April in the year 1602, in Tachem. Farewell

Your Honourable Servant
Jeronimus Wonderer

Sir, I herewith send my compartment box,[15] and request the kindness of some wine and a bottle with oil, for I have not had a drop for a fortnight after giving [what I had] to Oncon, as I have written to Y.E. earlier. Y.E. can seal the key inside the letter and, please Sir, do not let Longay in on this either, but mislead him with some sweet talking as advised.

After four more months of wrangling, Wonderaer and party finally accepted a purchase price of six tael *per* pikul *for the pepper, organized through local Chinese merchants. However, even that deal was not realized, and the trading mission finished as a campaign of plunder and arson along Vietnam's coast.*

[15] *Fleskelder*, a finely decorated chest with 12 to 15 compartments designed to carry bottles in an upright position.

3. A JAPANESE RESIDENT'S ACCOUNT

DECLARATION OF THE SITUATION OF QUINAM KINGDOM BY FRANSISCO, 1642

Translated by Ruurdje Laarhoven[1]

Dr Buch's study of the commercial intercourse between the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and Southern (Nguyễn) Vietnam during the early seventeenth century includes the present passage he transcribed from ***Koloniaal Archief. Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren 1643****, b. III, pp. 350-352. The name Quinam, as the Dutch called Cochinchina, appears to be a corruption of Quảng Nam, after Quảng Nam Quốc (Quảng Nam kingdom) as the Chinese and Japanese called Southern Vietnam. After negotiations between the Dutch and Cochinchina had broken down in early 1642, the departing Dutch fleet took the VOC's translator, an expatriate Japanese (whose Christian name was Fransisco) to Batavia as a captive. Because of Fransisco's familiarity with the country where he had lived ten years, he was brought back to Cochinchina with the VOC's punitive fleet in late 1642, during which voyage he was required to provide background intelligence to assist the Dutch expedition (Buch 1929:85-7).*

A declaration from a certain Japanese named Fransisco, who served as interpreter for the Company with our merchants Duyker and others, about the situation in the kingdom of Quinam, given on 28 May 1642 during an investigation conducted by Johan van Linga, captain of the Taiwan garrison.

1. Fransisco says that he is 52 years of age, of which he has spent ten years in Quinam and three in Cambodia.

[1] From W.J.M. Buch, *De Oost-Indische Compagnie en Quinam. De betrekkingen der Nederlanders met Annam in de XVII*e *eeuw*, Amsterdam, 1929, pp. 120-123.

2. The kingdom of Quinam begins at the Averelles [Cape Varella, the easternmost point of Vietnam] and ends at the Poutsin River [Sông Gianh].
3. It is possible to station a vessel near the [coastal] border of Quinam from April to the month of August, but this is dangerous during the northern monsoon in October, November and December.
4. During these three months the weather there is mainly rain and typhoons, and so the land is inundated, which is why the people have to live in lofts [stilt houses] or boats. This is confirmed by the sub-merchant, Goddert Bruggen, who was cast ashore there with the *Maria* on November 26 last [year] and noticed the land was under water owing to heavy rains, with the result that it took no less than eight days to sail to Faijpho [Faifo, i.e. Hội An].
5. The Japanese says that the kingdom of Quinam is bordered on one side by the *Toncquinder* [Tongkinese], on the other by the *Lauwen* [Laotians], on the third by the *Chiampaer* [Chams] and on the fourth by the sea.
6. The following merchandise can be obtained there each year, to wit:
100 *pikul* [6 tonnes] of silk,
50 to 60 *pikul* [3 to 3.6 tonnes] of eaglewood,
40 to 50 *kati* [24 to 30 kg] of aloe,[2]
100 *pikul* [6 tonnes] of pepper if it is a good year, of which 4 *pikul* [240 kg] are found near Cambier [Quy Nhơn],
3 to 400 *pikul* [1.8 to 2.4 tonnes] of black [brown] sugar,
the item cardamon, but he does not know the quantity.
7. The realm of Quinam near Champa [extends] no further than four, five or six *mijlen* [20 to 30 kilometres] from the sea and is cut by many small rivulets.
8. Half a *mijl* [3 km] upstream on the Faifo River [Sông Thu Bồn], the water has a depth of three *vadem* [5.5 metres] at high tide and two *vadem* [3.5 metres] at low tide. An arriving vessel stays in this shallow water until it has unloaded its heaviest cargo. He also says the river is approximately 100 *vadem* [180 metres] wide here; this river has a small barrage, whose width he does not know, but at low tide all the galleys and other types of vessels have to pass around it. At high tide, however, when the water is coming in from the sea, galleys that are no more than four *voeth* [one metre] deep can crisscross the river in all directions. One has to enter this river from the west side of three small islands [Cù Lao Chàm] which lie in front.
9. The country produces gold and iron but has no copper or silver mines. He says the inhabitants do not know how to manage their particular goldmine, which is situated around four or five *mijlen* [20 to 30 km] from the beach, but he thinks that a large quantity can be obtained from it.

[2]The resin from the heart of the eaglewood.

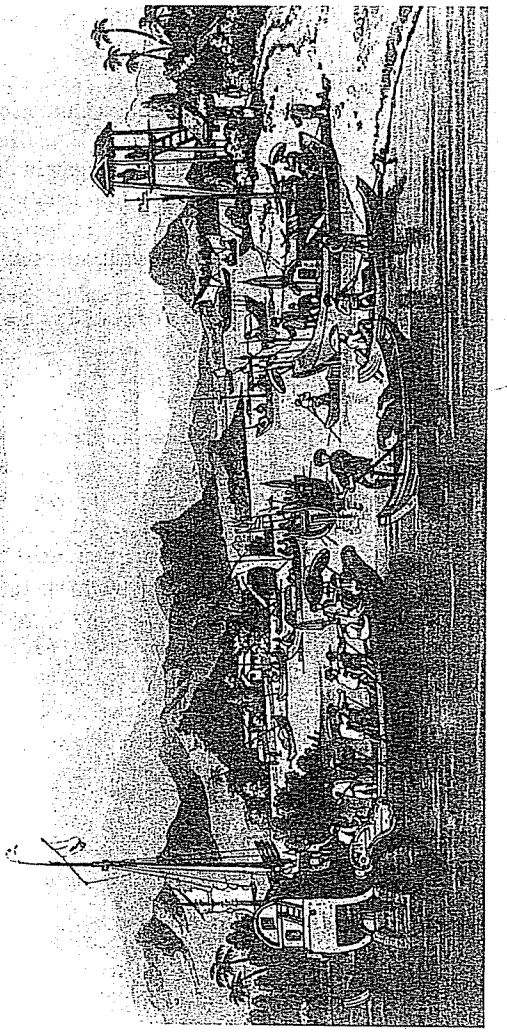

Figure 2. Shipping on the River Faifo (Sông Thu Bồn), 1793.
Original coloured drawing by W. Alexander in J. Barrow, *A Voyage to Cochinchina*, London, 1806.

10. A lot of gold occurs at a certain mountain around 10 *mijlen* [55 kilometres] upriver from the beach, but the inhabitants dare not recover it because of the haunting noises which can be heard there.
11. The kingdom of Quinam has neither walled cities nor castles, so the king himself lives in an open plain.
12. There are numerous buffalo, pigs, ducks, fowl and geese, but very few cows or horses.
13. In the territory of the king there are approximately 200 cannons with their barrels able to fire either 12, 8, 6, 5, or 3 *lb*[3] iron [shot]: 24 [of these the king] collected from the Dutch who stationed their ships there, and a similar quantity from the Portuguese; the remaining ones, he says, are positioned on the ground or on timber near the king's court.
14. They themselves cast the metal pieces of brass but are unable to do the same with iron.
15. There are no independent rulers of the land, so the reins of power are held by the king and his council.
16. The king's income consists of the tribute which the subjects pay annually, to wit: married men over 20 but under 50 years of age pay about 11 Spanish reals per year for their family; unmarried men of the same age pay half the amount just mentioned; all those below 20 and over 50 years old do not pay anything. Unmarried women, young or old, are exempted from this tribute.
17. There are approximately ten thousand tribute payers of which approximately two thirds are married.
18. The Quinam king employs an estimated four thousand soldiers, each of whom is paid as follows:

With either 10 or 12 reals per year,
item 360 *lb*[4] of paddy . . . ditto
and 2 cangues[5] . . . . . ditto.

If these soldiers were employed for a long period before finally dying in the service of the king, then the wives and the children were supported by the king, but otherwise this did not happen. He says the king of the Tongkinese on the other hand seizes the possessions of the dead, bringing about the poverty of the soldiers in Tongking.
19. Every company of Quinam soldiers amounts to 64 men.
20. Some of the soldiers-at-arms there are armed with firearms, others with soapknives and with pikes 15 *voeten* [4 metres] long, also with the bow and

[3]6, 4, 3, 2.5 and 1.5 kilograms respectively.
[4]180 kilograms.
[5]A coarse black or white cotton cloth, which in China was used as a portable pillory worn around the neck by criminals.

arrow and assagais[6] — all provided to them by the king. But every soldier has to make his own ammunition for which he is given sulphur and sulphur [*sic*; i.e. saltpetre].
21. There is no cavalry, but some chiefs and their attendants, around 200 strong, ride on horseback armed with lances and sabres.
22. The king possesses 600 elephants suitable for war. In addition to the driver, they carry small houses which can seat four men with weapons such as firearms or bow and arrow, as he explains having been in a muster himself. He says the elephants are very scared of fire and can be chased away with it.
23. The king has around 230 to 240 galleys to guard his kingdom. Item — that each galley is manned by 64 men [including] rowers and soldiers when it takes to the sea. Item — that every galley is equipped with a cannon firing 4, 5, 6 or 8 *lb*[7] iron [shot], and two ordnances.
24. The king stays in Senua [Thuận Hóa] around one and a half days' sail from Thoron [Đà Nẵng], but holds court further inland because of the country's numerous rivers.
25. The prince who is neither son nor brother of the king lives permanently in Cadjangh[8], where there are 40 heavy cannon pieces of which 16 are metal, he says; these pieces mostly fire 3, 4, 5 and 6 *pondt*[9] iron [shot].
26. In his time these pieces armed the 40 galleys to be found in the above-mentioned Cadjangh.
27. The saltpetre and the lead are brought from Siam whence an ambassador comes annually. The sulphur used to be obtained from Japan some time ago, and is obtained from the Laotians and the Chinese at present.
28. The soldiers know how to handle their firearms, though they are the same kind of warrior as the whole heathen lot around there.
29. There are 40 to 50 Japanese in Faifo, none in the service of the king.
30. Approximately four to five thousand or more indolent Chinese, none in the king's service, reside in this country; these Chinese do not pay tribute which is the reason they stay here, he says.
31. There are no wild horses, but there are indeed some deer.
32. There are no pearls in the country.
33. Furthermore, damask and satin are not made there, but sumongis, hokkiens, pelings and other goods are produced specifically for Japan.

[6]A type of spear.
[7]2, 2.5, 3 or 4 kilograms respectively.
[8]Cacciam, i.e. Kẻ Chàm or 'Cham's Place' in Vietnamese (i.e. Chàm Dinh on Map 8). Once the capital of Quảng Nam but now located in the village of Thanh Chiêm in Điện Bàn county.
[9]1.5, 2, 2.5 and 3 kilograms respectively.

34. Ten or twelve natives of Portugal come there each year and only leave again at the beginning of June.
35. There are a fair number of Roman Catholics around Cape Varella, Cambier, and also in Cadjangh, but their number is on the wane again because the king has expelled the papists from the country.
36. He thinks that the kingdom of Quinam could be conquered with 1,000 good Japanese soldiers.
37. Faifo is located approximately one *mijle* [5 km] from the seashore and can be reached by boat, but on foot one has to cross several streams flowing into this Faifo River.
38. Like all heathens they are barely active in their worship; some people would be disposed towards Roman Christianity, but the king opposes it.
39. The present king is a legitimate heir but his ancestors obtained the kingdom illegitimately.
40. The king is much liked by some and hated by others, as is usually the case.

[This enquiry took place] in the yacht called the *Kievith*, sailing along the Champa coast at 11½ degrees north of the equator, this 28th day of May in the year 1642.

4. THE END OF DUTCH RELATIONS WITH THE NGUYỄN STATE, 1651-2

Excerpts translated by Anthony Reid

From 1638 until the death of the ruler Nguyễn Phúc Lan in March 1648, Dutch relations with Quinam (Cochinchina) were poisoned by the two issues of Dutch relations with Tongking and the salvage rights over Dutch shipwrecks on the Vietnamese coast. Nineteen Dutch survivors of a 1641 shipwreck were held captive in Cochinchina, though their numbers were steadily reduced by death and by escape. The ruler refused to consider releasing them, despite intervention of various figures including the French Jesuit Alexandre de Rhodes, unless Vietnamese captives held by the Dutch in Taiwan were first set free.

The new ruler Nguyễn Phúc Tần was eager for peace with the Dutch East India Company, and sent a message through the head of the Chinese in Batavia, Bingam, to this effect. This eventually led to the 1651 mission of Willem Verstegen, member of the Raad van Indië *in Batavia and former President of the Company's lodge at Firando in Japan. Verstegen was commissioned first to inspect the Company's affairs in Taiwan and Tongking, which enabled him to take the fluent Vietnamese-speaker Hendrik Baron to Cochinchina from the Tongking lodge. The mission arrived off the Nguyễn capital on 24 November 1651 and on 8 December a treaty was agreed with the king.* [1]

Article 1. There will be no more talk of the previous conflicts, nor the enmities which stemmed from them, while as true and faithful allies we will restore peace with each other and maintain it forever.

[1]Translated from W.J.M. Buch, *De Oost-Indische Compagnie en Quinam. De betrekkingen der Nederlanders met Annam in der XVII^e eeuw*, Amsterdam, 1929, pp. 112-113. Modernizing the Dutch, Buch transcribed the treaty from the *Dagregister van Verstegen* (Verstegen's diary).

Article 2. The captives on both sides will be released, including the thirty-three [Vietnamese] people of both sexes which the Ambassador has brought with him from Taiwan, and those whom he may encounter in Batavia or elsewhere.

Article 3. The Company will again be able to visit Quinam to exercise 'free and frank' trade, to which end the Ambassador may select an appropriate piece of land in Faifo [Hội An] on which to build a lodge, where the residents can live whom he will leave behind or who will later come there.

Article 4. The residents of the Company in Quinam will enjoy the same rights and privileges as earlier, and will stand under the king's particular protection, provided they on their side behave properly and do not molest any of the king's subjects.

Article 5. If the king's subjects commit an offence against the Netherlanders they will be punished according to the laws of the country; similarly if the Netherlanders commit an offence against Quinammers, they will be judged by the head of the Company's lodge.

Article 6. The King shall provide all possible help to Netherlands ships which may be wrecked on the coast of Quinam or Champa, including the salvaging of goods.

Article 7. The Quinammers who help in the salvage of such goods shall be fairly rewarded by the Netherlanders, while the king in return will forego any salvage rights.

Article 8. Quinam ships which may be wrecked on the coast of lands belonging to the Company will be helped in the same way.

Article 9. Netherlands ships will not be inspected in Quinam, and will be free from the payment of the import and export duties which the Chinese, Portuguese and other peoples must pay.

Article 10. The Ambassador undertakes to see to it that the Netherlands ships provide the king with those goods which he may desire, without payment or levy.

* * * *

Verstegen left Hendrik Baron in charge of the Dutch post in Hội An, and returned to Batavia on 31 December 1651. His report on how matters stood in Cochinchina was incorporated into the Generaal Missive *(General Despatch) from Batavia to Amsterdam of 24 January 1652.*[2]

As far as the place of residence goes, the king has liberally honoured the Company. The Commissioner has himself chosen for it the camp of the Japanese in Pheypho [Faifo], where up to now the old [Dutch] lodge stood; and while this place had been provided by a certain Japanese with a stone house and two neat godowns[3] or warehouses, and well planted with all kinds of fruit trees, this man sold us the house and its dependents (although they could not well understand this at first) for 500 Japanese *tael.*

* * * *

The house is still new and was originally built only last year, so that for the time being it can be considered sufficient until the time when we know what the trade there will be. We shall take care that timely consignments are sent there at the beginning of the monsoon, and moreover place things in such order that the Hon. Company will enjoy the hoped-for profits as well as other tradegoods. The principal profit used to be in 'senes' or cash, which are currently not taken there at all, because previously there was no advantage to be drawn, and the Hon. Company will insist on profits. However, we have hopes that in place of those profits we will be able to export a good amount of calambac and eaglewood from there, now that the Quinammer has subjugated Champa by force of arms, decapitated the king and emprisoned the Dayro[4] and his wife, whereby the trade in that kingdom is opened to us.

* * * *

[Gifts of three cannons and 5,265 guilders were made to facilitate this treaty; which in Tongking] . . . will cause great upset and displeasure among them;

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[2]Translated from W. Ph. Coolhaas (ed.), *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, vol. II, 1639-1655, The Hague, 1964, pp. 574-575.

[3]Dutch 'godonnen', from the Malay *gudang*, originally meaning a storehouse for cloth in particular, built half-underground for protection against fire.

[4]Coolhaas notes that Dairo (properly *Dairi*, 'inner sanctum') was a Japanese term used by the Dutch to refer to the powerless Japanese emperor, whom they believed to be a kind of high priest. The reference here seems to be to a sacred ruler or high priest of Champa. Verstegen had visited this captive and his wife, in a place of detention 'more like a dogbox than a human residence' during his visit to Quinam in December 1651. The conquest of Champa occurred in the middle of 1650 (Buch 1929: 111).

however, we believe that as the Quinammer has been victorious over Champa, this has aroused fear in Tongking and will make the Company appear awesome and in this manner . . . will hold them one as a knife and the other the sheath whereby, it is thought, the Hon. Company could not expect an advantage or a better reception in either of these kingdoms; moreover we can politely excuse ourselves with the Tongkinese, since we now live in peace with Spain and Portugal, who used to be our bitter enemies[5] (for Your Excellencies' order leads in that direction, and we will try to implement it with all Indian potentates), which is therefore the reason we have made peace with Quinam (as we still intend to do with Cambodia).

* * * *

These hopes were not realized. Rumours reached the king just before Verstegen's departure that he had ambassadors from Tongking concealed aboard his ship. Verstegen refused a request to search the ship, which together with his rapid departure thereafter appeared to confirm the king's suspicions.

Baron and the other four remaining Dutchmen were seized from the lodge and taken to the marketplace, apparently for a speedy trial and execution. This was prevented by the intervention of the Mandarin Ongsia and the well-placed Japanese merchant 'Taffioyedonne'. They were allowed to leave for Batavia on board a Chinese junk, and to tell the Governor-General that the king still felt bound by the treaty signed, and that the Dutch could return with the next monsoon, but that he demanded the right to inspect the complement of men on the Dutch ships arriving in his country (Buch 1929: 113-5). The Dutch factors reached Batavia on 2 February, and the Company's reaction to their report was incorporated in the 'General Despatch' to Amsterdam of 5 February 1652.[6]

It was presumed there, and is very probable, that the king had the intention of seizing the yacht [of Verstegen] and killing the people, appropriating both it and the goods stored in it; but then it seemed to him that Heer Verstegen had left earlier, or so it appeared when he had guessed it; so being seized with a great vexation, he wanted to take his anger out on the remaining ministers and put the above scandalous tale to work, having obliged our people before their departure to suffer extraordinarily many humiliations, burdens and injuries against which they dared not protest, but must bear everything patiently and even give the evil people

[5]The Treaty of Munster in 1647-8 ended the state of war between the Netherlands and Spain.
[6]Translated from W. Ph. Coolhaas (ed.), *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, vol. II, 1639-1655, The Hague, 1964, pp. 583-584.

further presents so as not to encounter yet more difficulties; and the king took for himself the lakens and *perpetuanen*[7] left there by Heer Verstegen, evaluating and paying for them according to his pleasure, without listening to any arguments against this, from which the great insolence and shamelessness of this nation can be measured. In justification of this behaviour they adduce only that this is the way they are used to dealing with other nations. Despite all this the king has sent with our people, at their departure, another 500 *tael* of silver to buy for him here in Batavia some lakens, *perpetuanen* and other things which are acceptable to him, not once imagining, so it appears, that we would take offense at the above or show ourselves to be injured by it — something which, in our opinion, is in the highest degree necessary if the Company's prestige in this quarter is not to be utterly trampled on, being already too much diminished by the fact that, without any satisfaction for the former injuries and affronts received, we again offered and accorded her peace. Hence this specimen must necessarily be revenged, or else we will perhaps have to expect the same treatment in Tongking, being virtually the same nation and with little modesty in her comportment because notice was taken of her in her time owing to her abundance of ships and men; hence we share Your Excellencies' feelings that it is better to do nothing than to undertake something that cannot be carried through with any respect, as has happened there up to now, because they are apparently still feeling brave and bold. The mestizo barber[8] taken captive there earlier has again remained there, having not come out when the others left; so we fear it will be difficult to get him out of their hands, particularly as we have retaken the Quinammers here, who had been released as a result of the peace, into slavery again.

[7]Types of Dutch cloth.
[8]Jacob Discordt.

5. MAPS OF SOUTHERN VIETNAM, c.1690

GIÁP NGỌ NIÊN BÌNH NAM ĐỒ [MAPS OF THE PACIFIED SOUTH IN THE YEAR OF *GIÁP NGỌ*]

Translated and interpreted by David Bulbeck and Li Tana

The series of maps called *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ* covers the length of Vietnam under the suzerainty of the Nguyễn kings, from the north border with the Trịnh to the Mekong delta at the south. The maps were incorporated with the materials compiled by the court of the Nguyễn dynasty during the nineteenth century. The original copy is held by the Hán-Nôm Institute, Hanoi, under accession number A.2499.[1] Copies of the maps are also held by the Toyo Bunko (Toyo Bunko X-75), Tokyo, from which source come the two reproduced here.[2] The version from which we worked are negative copies, published in 1962 with an accompanying Vietnamese translation under the title *Hồng Đức Bản Đồ* by Trương Bửu Lâm (Bộ Quốc Gia Giáo Dục, Saigon).

Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ means 'maps drawn in the year of *Giáp Ngọ*, when the south [region under the Nguyễn] was pacified'. Indeed 1774, the year when the Trịnh armies moved southwards from the Red River delta and defeated the Nguyễn, was a year of *Giáp Ngọ*. However, as Trương Bửu Lâm (*loc. cit.*, p. 17) points out, the title is contradicted by the note written beneath it on the cover to the maps. The note reads '[These maps are] drawn and presented by Đốc Xuất Đoan Quận Công', which is to say Nguyễn Hoàng who ruled between 1558 and 1613 under the title Đoan Quận Công. Nguyễn Hoàng did not experience any attacks from the north, nor did his reign include any year of *Giáp Ngọ*.

As Trương Bửu Lâm (*op. cit.*) notes, these and some related maps include some names of early Nguyễn emperors such as Noãn, Ánh, Chủng, Luân, Hoàn and Lạn. He infers they were probably copied and compiled before any of these

[1]An annotated copy is also held by the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris.
[2]Quảng Bình at the north (Figure 3) and Quy Ninh in the centre (Figure 4).

words became taboo, i.e. before 1807.[3] The title *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ* might seem to fix the date at 1774. Or they could have been copied beforehand, because the title might merely signal when the maps were presented by the Nguyễn to the victorious Trịnh, as recorded by a direct reference in *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục* (Miscellaneous Records in the Border Area).[4]

Nevertheless the originals on which these maps were based must have been drafted well before 1774, although a date as early as the reign of Nguyễn Hoàng is not acceptable. The evidence from the maps themselves dates their origin to between 1687 and 1690.

1690 is the last possible date because Thái Khang prefecture, as it appears on the maps, was renamed Bình Khang in that year. The same source, *Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên* (Veritable Record of Đại Nam's Initial Period), further tells us that Diên Ninh prefecture (as it appears on the maps) was renamed Diên Khánh in 1742.[5] Other archaic names found on the maps confirm the point. For instance the small area where the king of Champa lived, called Chiêm Thành or Champa, had been replaced by the establishment of Thuận Thành Trấn in 1693, then marking the end of the kingdom of Champa. Similarly the *Gia Định Thành Thông Chí* (Gazetteer of the Gia Định Citadel) records that the Nguyễn had set up Gia Định prefecture in the Mekong delta by 1698,[6] but the old name 'Đồng Nai' appears on our maps. Finally the former region of Hoài Nhơn, which had been renamed Quy Nhơn in 1602, generally retained that name except for the interval between 1655 and 1742 when it was called Quy Ninh,[7] the name shown in *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ*.

The last point further indicates that the maps were drawn after 1655. More precisely they were drawn after 1687, as they show the Nguyễn capital at Phú Xuân (Huế), the situation which prevailed only from 1687 onwards.[8]

[3]The point made by Trương Bửu Lâm further explains why the three *thuộc* of Quy Ninh — Thì Ngạn, Thì Lượng and Thì Đôn — appear as Thần Ngạn, Thần Lượng and Thần Đôn in *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục* and *Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên*. The original names, as shown in *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ*, were changed to avoid using 'Thì' which was a personal name of the Nguyễn emperor Tự Đức.
[4]*Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*, vol. 1, p. 47b.
[5]*Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên* , vol. 10, p. 136.
[6]*Gia Định Thành Thông Chí*, vol 2, p.12, Saigon, 1972.
[7]*Đại Nam Nhất Thống Chí*, vol. 2, p. 1072, Tokyo, 1941; *Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên* , vol. 10, p. 136.
[8]*Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên* , vol. 6, p. 89.

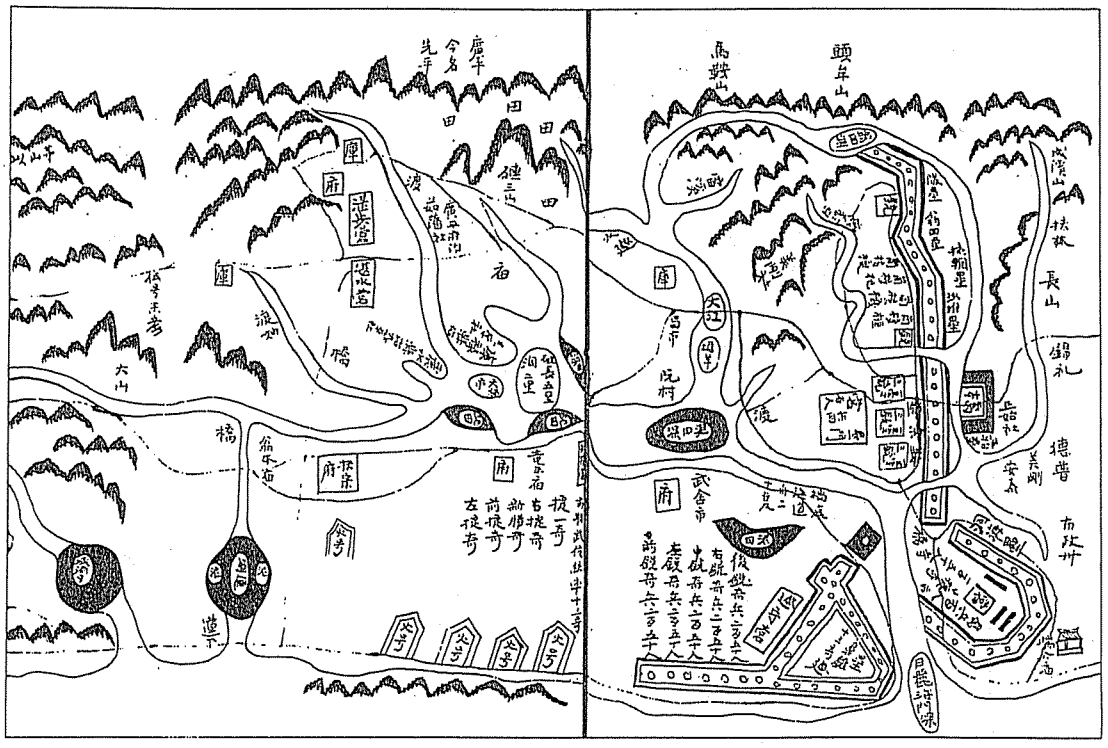


Figure 3. Vietnamese Map of Quảng Bình, c.1690. *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ.*

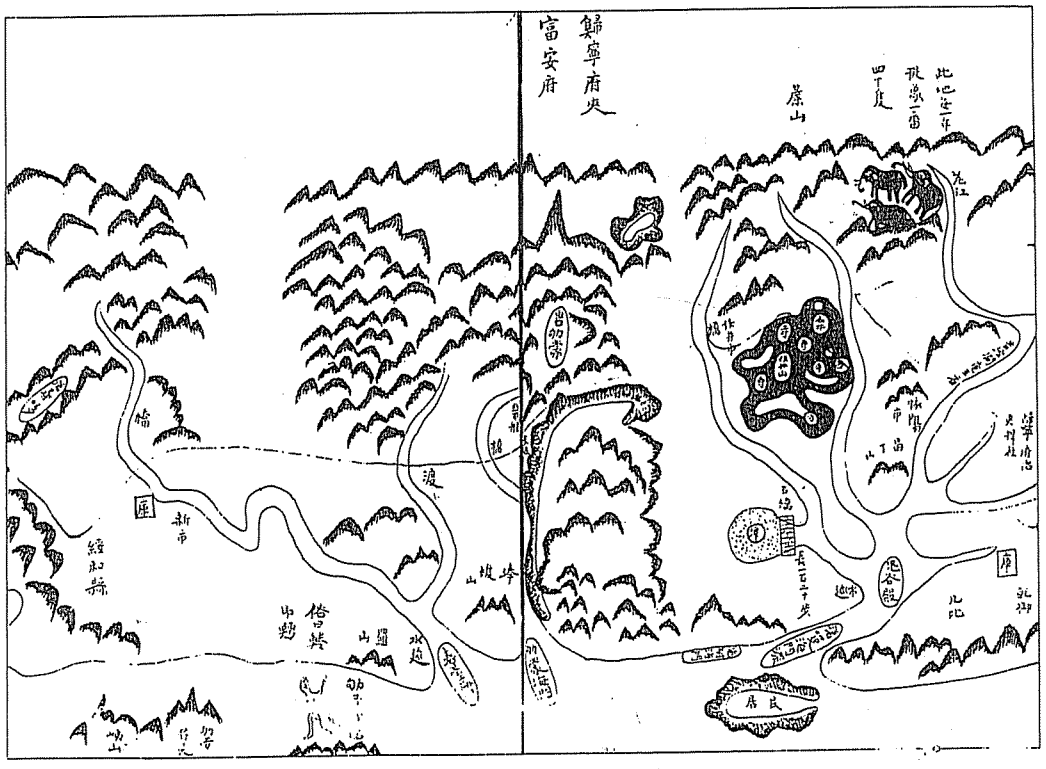


Figure 4. Vietnamese Map of Quy Ninh, c.1690. *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ.*

A late seventeenth century date is also commensurate with the depiction of the Mekong delta area. The maps show settlement beginning to open up the area, but exclude several places which became important during the eighteenth century, such as Vũng Tàu and Phố Đài.[9]

As Figures 3 and 4 show, a lot of information has been drawn and written on the maps. Originally we copied the maps, replacing the symbols and characters with modern cartographic symbols and direct translations of all the government installations, temples, tombs, fields, lakes, bays, ponds, mountains, villages and other toponyms, commentaries presumably written when the maps were copied, etc. However, as David Marr pointed out, even people fully familiar with Vietnam's geography would find great difficulty in matching the translated maps to the present landscape, so that a more useful approach could lie in interpreting the maps. Close scrutiny of Dr Marr's large-scale maps of Vietnam then allowed us to locate the c.1690 features upon the modern landscape, as presented here (Maps 3 to 12).

Matching toponyms were the most important clue during the exercise. When toponyms could not be matched, shape of the river systems was the most useful criterion, for these appear in *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ* in a detailed and basically correct, albeit somewhat transformed version. Otherwise the courses of the c.1690 roads compared to the modern roads, and direct scalar estimates, were used to locate places. Hence many of the places shown on our interpreted maps are very precisely identified, and we feel confident that the great majority would be accurate to ten kilometres or less.

As our Maps 3 to 12 are interpretations we have corrected any obvious errors which are likely to be sources of confusion. For example our maps do not follow the originals in depicting the Great Trường Sa on the mainland, nor in placing the Kim Bồng and Thì Phú harbours both one river mouth to the north of their correct location. Analogously the original maps attribute Triệu Phong with two prefecture offices, and here our interpretation (Map 7) excises the one depicted quite far from modern Triệu Phong. On the other hand we have refrained from making corrections which involve any speculation. For instance our Map 6 follows the original (Figure 3) in showing only a single defensive wall at the Nguyễn-Trịnh border, even though two such walls had apparently been built by the early seventeenth century.[10]

Our interpretations concentrate on installations of vital political and military importance and places of main economic significance. The general distribution of

[9] While the maps include a harbour called Phố Đài immediately southwest of Man Lý (Map 12), it cannot be the same Phố Đài (Cù Lao Đài Phố) which became an important place along the Đồng Nai River in the late eighteenth century.

[10] *Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên*, vol. 2, pp. 38-40.

these forts, government offices, granaries, toll-booths (for collecting overland trade levies), markets, guesthouses and harbours are shown in the three small-scale maps (Maps 3 to 5). The decreasing concentration from north to south of these places, notably the offices, agrees with the general picture of Nguyễn Vietnam contained in the written sources. The small-scale maps also show the prefecture borders, as sketchily indicated in *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ*, and drawn by us to follow the modern counterparts or, when not the same line, major watersheds. Maps 6 to 12 then give the detailed locations of the forts, etc., usually prefecture by prefecture, as well as supplementary information on the Nguyễn military and economic organization and on any Cham installations.

Our interpretations do not include all the information which might be considered relevant to the economic historian, for the following reasons. (i) While following a sensible pattern of generally decreasing frequency from north to south, the fields in *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ* can match up against only a small fraction of the fields presumably under cultivation, so the point of plotting them would be unclear. (ii) Overland transport appears to have been primarily served by a continuous road from the north to the Mekong delta, with connecting branches in the better populated areas. But attempting to plot the road would not impart further information, and rather cross-cut the coastline's complex drainage system in a confusing way. (iii) Information on all the administrative divisions beneath the prefectures, and the attributes of the harbours, would clutter the maps if added there. Accordingly those data are summarized below.

Administrative Divisions (from *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ*)

Quảng Bình prefecture: Khang Lộc county, Lệ Thủy county, Minh Linh county.[11]

Triệu Phong prefecture has five counties: Phú Vang, Hương Trà, Quảng Điền, Hải Lăng, Vũ Xương.

Thăng Hoa prefecture has four counties, Tân An,[12] Duy Xuyên, Hà Đông, Lễ Dương; and eight *thuộc* (upcountry divisions), Hà Bá, Sài Tân, Thương Nhân, Sơn Dụng, Võng Nhi, Chu Tượng, Liêm Hộ, Hoa Châu.

Quảng Ngãi prefecture has three counties, Mộ Hoa, Chương Mỹ, Bình Sơn.

Quy Ninh prefecture has three counties, Tuy Viễn, Phù Ly, Bồng Sơn; and three *thuộc*, Thì Ngạn Thuộc, Thì Lượng Thuộc, Thì Đôn Thuộc.

Phú Yên prefecture has two counties, Tuy Hòa, Đồng Xuân.

Thái Khang prefecture has three counties, Tân Định, Tân Khang,[13] Quảng Phúc.

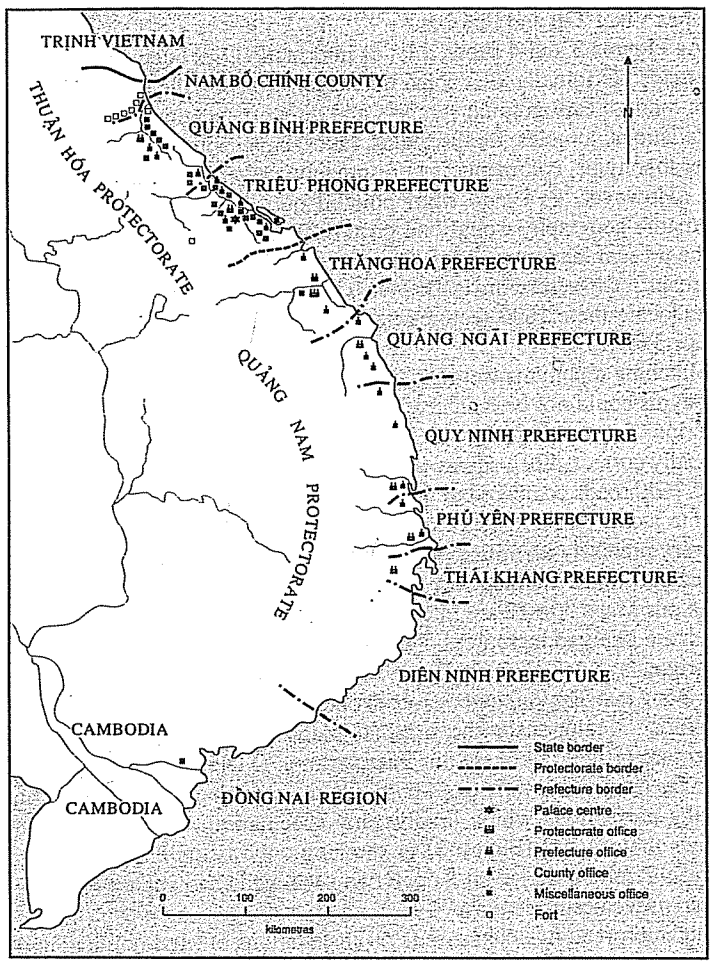
Diên Ninh prefecture has three counties, Vĩnh Xương, Phúc Điền, Hoa Châu.

[11] Unlike the following cases, the divisions of Quảng Bình are not specified in a caption on the original map.

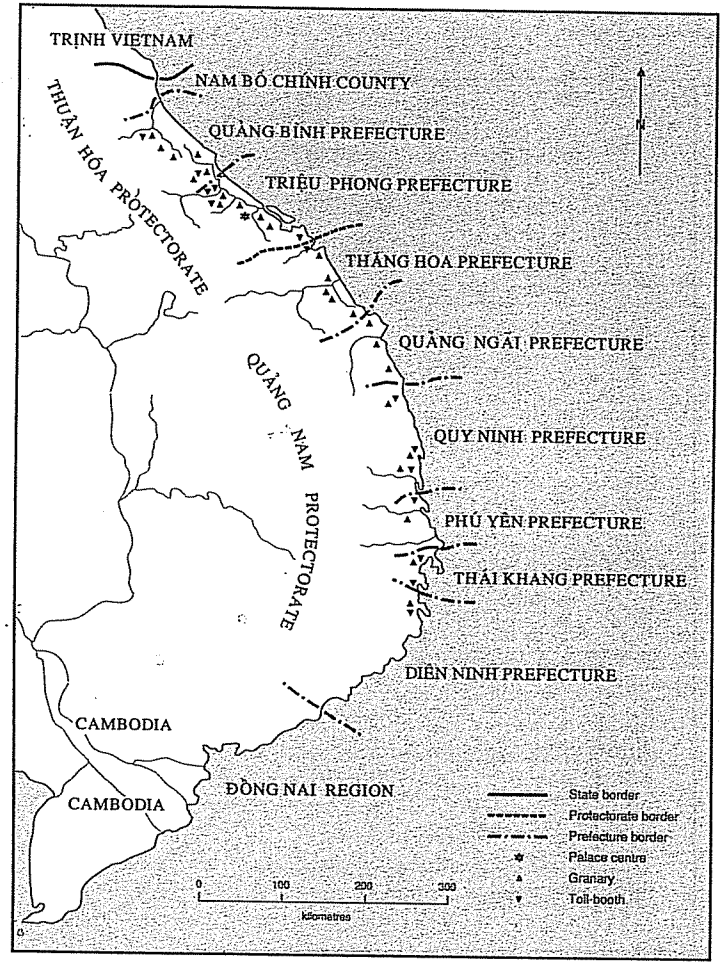
[12] Tân An and Tân Khang do not appear in any other source.

Harbours described by *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ*

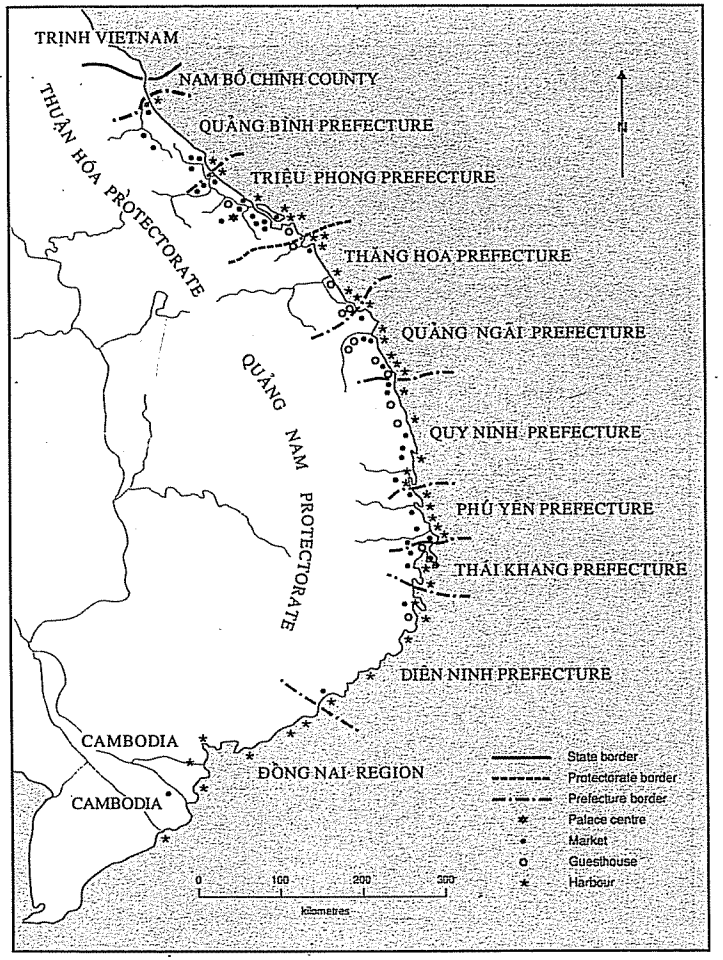
Nhật Lệ harbour, deep; Minh Linh or Tùng harbour; Việt harbour, deep; Eo harbour (giving access to the major port of Thanh Hà); Từ Khách harbour; Cảnh Dương harbour; Chu Mãi harbour, shallow; Độ Ải harbour, medium-deep; Câu Để harbour, medium-deep; Đà Nẵng harbour, deep and large (also a major port); Đại Chiêm harbour (otherwise known as Hội An port, also a major port); An Hoà harbour, medium-deep; Hoà Hợp harbour, deep and large; Chu Ổ harbour, medium-deep; Sa Kỳ harbour; Tiểu (small) harbour; Đại Nham harbour; Mỹ Á harbour; Sa Hùynh harbour, shallow; Kim Bồng harbour; Thì Phú harbour; Nước Ngọt harbour, deep; Nước Mặn harbour, deep (also a major port); Thi Nại harbour; Cù Mông harbour; Xuân Đài harbour; Mây Nước harbour; Phú Yên harbour, deep; Răn Răn harbour; Tiểu (small) harbour, deep; Trúc Tịch harbour; Nha Du harbour, medium-deep; Nha Trang harbour, deep; Vĩnh Hoan harbour, deep; Cam Tinh harbour, deep; Man Lang harbour, deep; Man Lý harbour; Phố Đài harbour, medium-shallow; Xích Lam harbour, medium-deep; Pha Ly harbour, medium-shallow; Cạn harbour, medium-shallow; Tắc Kế harbour, medium-shallow; Mỹ Tho harbour, deep and large; Nước Lộn harbour, deep and large; Cao Miên harbour, deep and large.



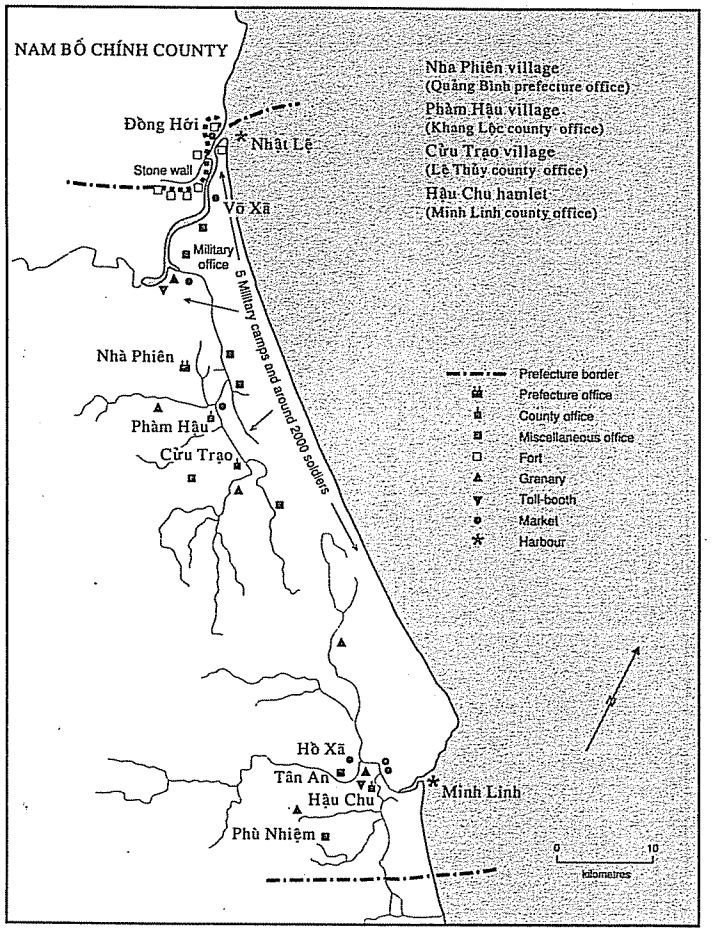
Map 3. Southern Vietnam in c.1690: Offices and Forts.
As Extracted from *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ*



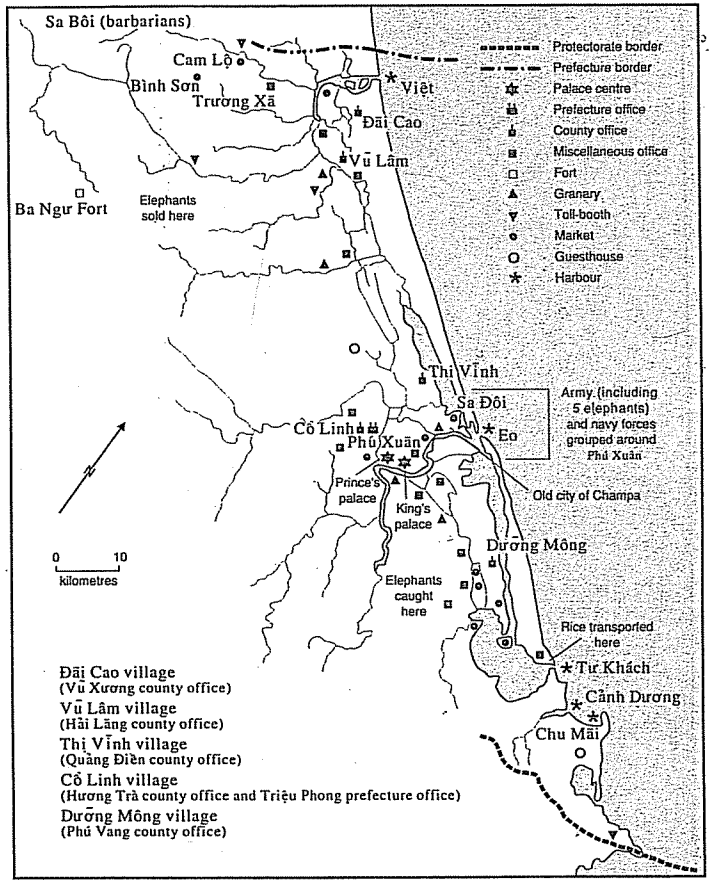
Map 4. Southern Vietnam in c.1690: Granaries and Toll-booths.
As Extracted from *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ*



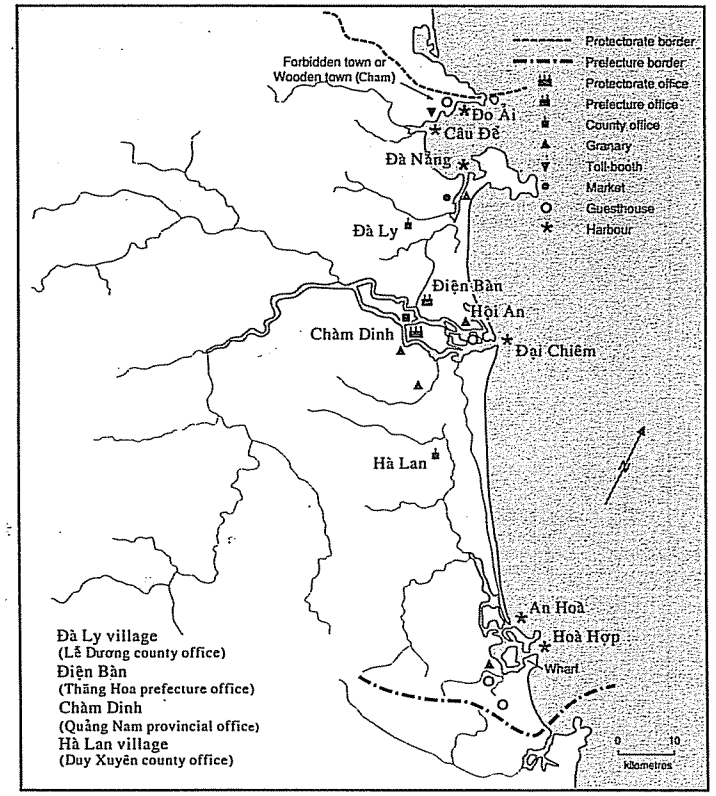
Map 5. Southern Vietnam in c.1690: Markets, Guesthouses and Harbours.
As Extracted from *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ*



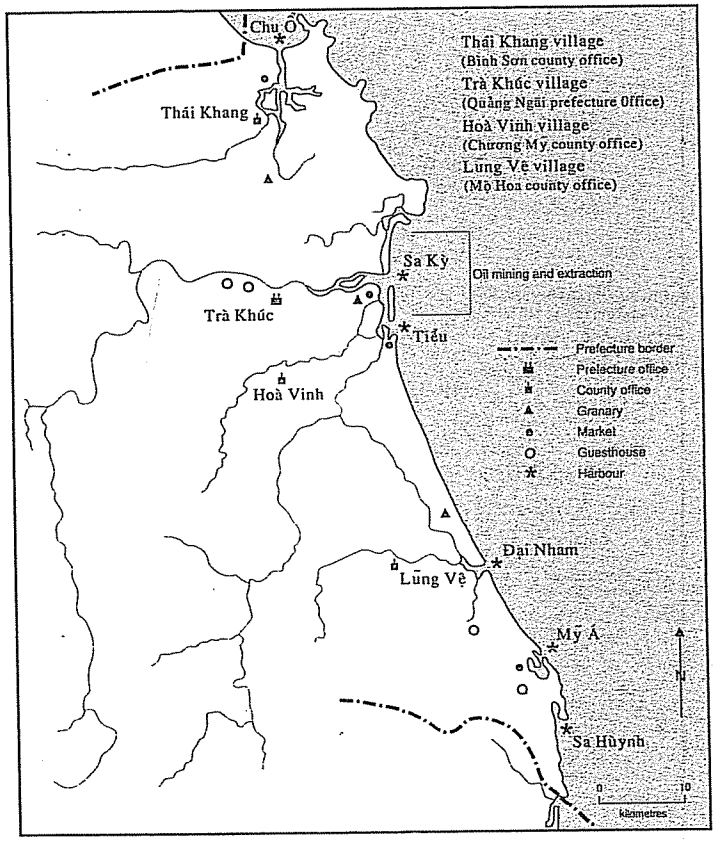
Map 6. Quảng Bình Prefecture, Thuận Hóa Protectorate, c.1690



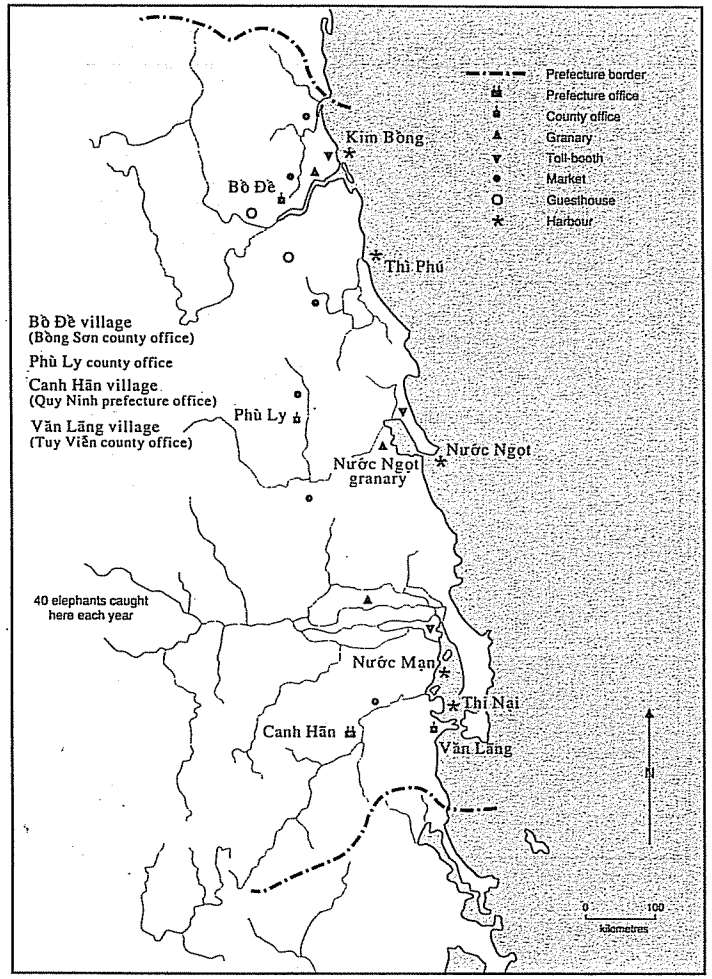
Map 7. Triệu Phong Prefecture, Thuận Hóa Protectorate, c.1690



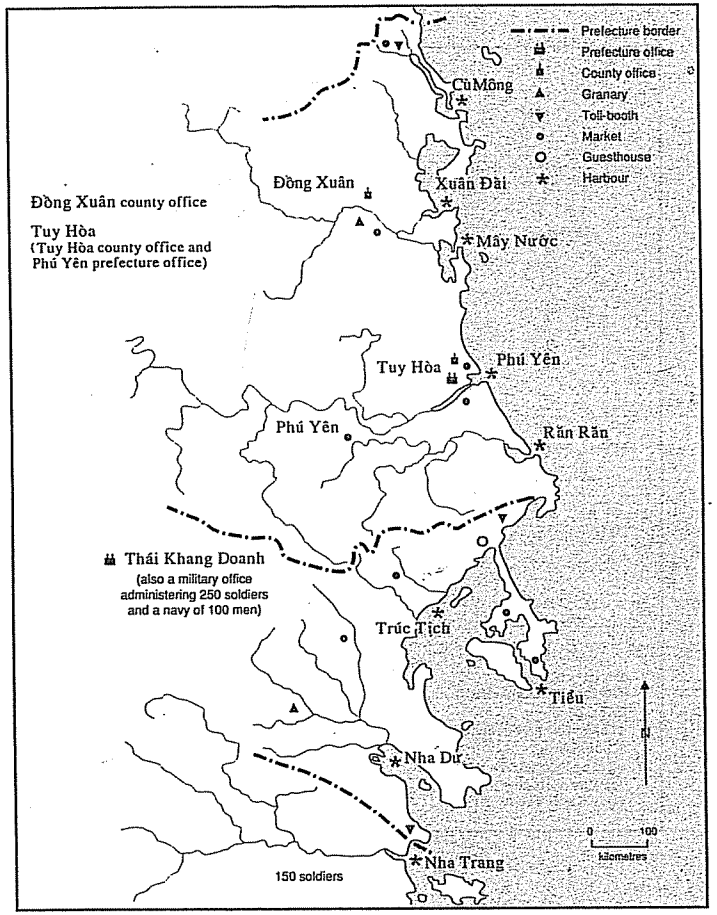
Map 8. Thăng Hoa Prefecture, Quảng Nam Protectorate, c.1690



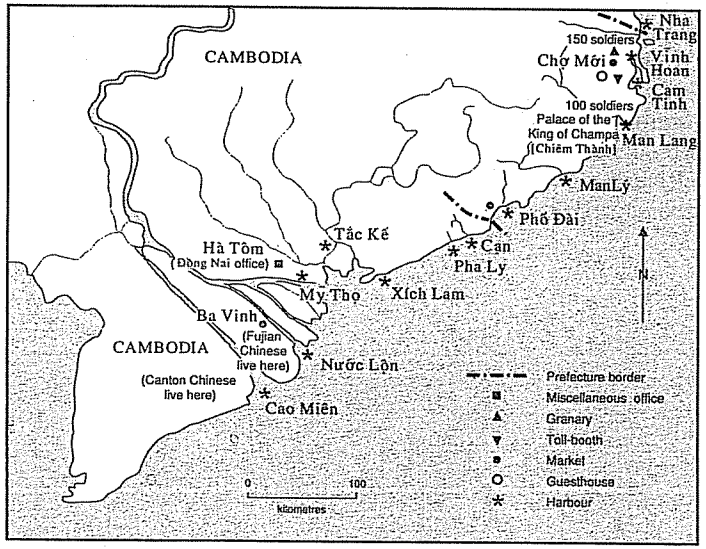
Map 9. Quảng Ngãi Prefecture, Quảng Nam Protectorate, c.1690



Map 10. Quy Ninh Prefecture, Quảng Nam Protectorate, c.1690



Map 11. Phú Yên and Thái Khang Prefectures, Quảng Nam Protectorate, c.1690



Map 12. Đồng Nai Region and Diên Ninh Prefecture, Quảng Nam Protectorate, c.1690

6. A CHINESE BUDDHIST REPORT, 1694-5

HAI WAI JI SHI [RECORD OF COUNTRIES OVERSEAS]

By Da Shan

Excerpts translated by Li Tana

Da Shan was a Chinese Buddhist monk from Chang Shou temple in Guangdong province. He was invited by the Nguyễn ruler (Nguyễn Phúc Chu) to Phú Xuân (Huế) and Hội An between August 1694 and November 1695 to explain the principles of Buddhism. His book ***Hai Wai Ji Shi****, in four volumes, was probably first published in 1699. The following extracts are translated from* ***Shi qi shì jì Guang Nan Xin Shi Liao*** *[A New Source about Quảng Nam in the Seventeenth Century], a photomechanical reprint of the original 1699 edition, edited by Chingho A. Chen (Taipei, 1960).*

[Looking from aboard our ship] we could see that there were more women than men, and their clothes were colourful. There was no city wall, not even close to the court, but many bamboos had been planted to serve as walls. Among the bamboos there were some cannons which must have weighed hundreds or thousands of *cân*[1]. Behind the cannons there was another row of bamboos, and inside these stood a low red wall wherein the ruler lived.

The many Buddhist flags and wooden fish and people striking inverted bells in the palace made it just like a temple (Vol. 1, pp. 15-16).

* * * *

[1] A *cân* weighs 600 grams.

The next morning, while it was still very early, I heard a lot of noise outside. I got up to find a court official and two officials from the Ministry of Works, along with approximately 1,000 soldiers, coming to build houses for me. Some soldiers were carrying bamboo, some were carrying wood, some were whittling rattan and some were digging. They shouted as they worked for three days and nights, until a house with five rooms was erected. The passage, the wooden walls and the floor, indeed everything was perfect. At the same time, a storehouse with five rooms was also built.

Then I was told that the craftsmen in the country were all soldiers. Every March and April the army officials went to the villages to round up soldiers. They captured all of the fit men over 16 years old, tied them to bamboo yokes and took them to the army. The yoke was like a ladder but slightly narrower. After the men were trained as soldiers the court sent each one of them to learn a skill. After learning the skills, they were sent to different warships to be drilled. When there was a war they were soldiers, but when they were not needed as soldiers they worked for the state. They could not go home and live with their families until they were 60 years old. Their families were only allowed to visit them and bring them some clothes. This situation meant that all of the men left in the villages were either old or disabled. It also encouraged parents to send their sons to become Buddhist monks when they were still teenagers out of fear that they would otherwise be captured by the army. This resulted in Buddhists everywhere but very little knowledge of the principles of Buddhism. They did not even know the *Lii* and the *Lun*[2], not to mention the *Chan* [*Thiền* in Vietnamese][3]. What is more, immoral conduct was more widespread in the temples than in secular society (Vol. 1, pp. 22-23).

* * * *

One day the king sent one of the eunuchs to tell me that he was going to drill his elephant troop, so he invited me to have a look. When we arrived at the place, I saw that the line of people who came to watch was four to five *li* [2-2.5 kilometres] long. Ten elephants with red lacquer saddles stood in the western part of the arena. The saddles were like bucket seats and could hold three soldiers. The soldiers sitting inside had red and gold helmets on their heads and green flannelette uniforms on their bodies. The *xiang nu* [the slave leading the elephant] held a hook and stood by the elephant.

In the eastern part of the ground stood 500 soldiers with knives, spears and guns in their hands. The soldiers were one or two *li* away from the elephants. As

[2]*Lii* (commandment) and *Lun* (exposition) are the two main parts of the Buddhist scriptures.
[3]A sect of Chinese Buddhism, developed in the seventh century. Its doctrines became the most influential Buddhist ideas in China, especially among Chinese intellectuals.

soon as the signal was given the soldiers ran towards the elephants and fired, but the elephants stood still. Then the bronze drums began beating, the *xiang nu* poked the elephants' heads with their hooks, and the soldiers sitting on top poked the elephants' flanks. The elephants then charged forward furiously towards the soldiers who all started running to escape from them. The elephants bowled over some soldiers, and the other soldiers riding the elephants then jabbed these poor soldiers with hooks and spears, causing them to bleed. Some could not even get up. This battle enabled the court to distinguish the best and the worst elephants. The promotion of officers and soldiers was also based on the results of the battle.

The country fed the elephants even better than it fed its people. Every day the elephants were fed a *hộc* of beans and a *hộc* of unhusked rice.[4] Each elephant was surrounded by 50 soldiers during a battle. Corporal punishment was also carried out by elephant. The prisoner who had committed a felony was given to the elephant, which then threw the prisoner very high in the air and raised its tusks to thrust them into the person's body (Vol. 2, pp. 25-27).

* * * *

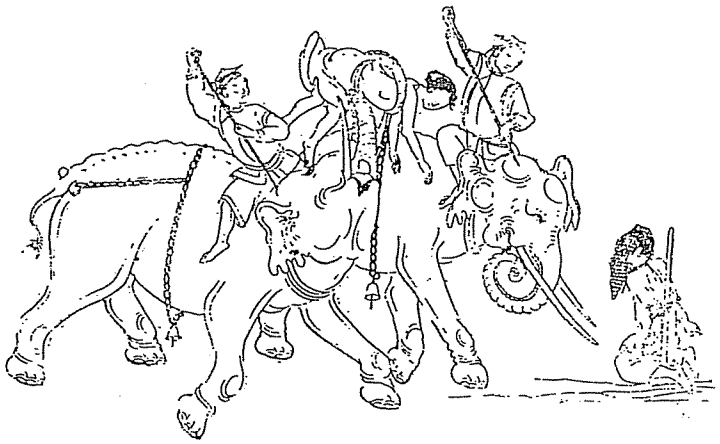


Figure 5. Punishment of an Adulteress (left) and Execution by Elephant (right). Reproduced from P. Huard and H. Durand, *Connaissance du Việt-nam*, Hanoi, 1954, p. 114.

[4]Presumably the *hộc* which equals 5 litres (see Glossary of Vietnamese Terms).

The people here were miserable. Land was very limited, and the rice produced was not enough to feed the local people. Thuận Hóa and Hội An had to rely on other districts. The people called rice *cơm*[5] because they could never obtain enough of it. Fish, shrimps, vegetables and fruits were eaten to add to the limited rice.

The region was hemmed in between the mountains and the sea. In every little patch of flat land there were houses. People were divided into *xã* [villages] each of which had its own head. If people produced rice, then 70 or 80 per cent of it went to the government. If they fished or cut wood, then they had to surrender their produce to the head of the village and received only [their share] in return. They also had to pay their personal taxes. In addition bamboo, wood, rice, damask silk of both fine and rough quality, and everything else had to be offered to the government. Whenever there was something to be done for the government, the head of the village assigned some people to do it. They had to bring their own food with them when they were performing such services for the government. All the commerce was carried out by women, with no consideration of the differences between *nei* and *wai* [inside and outside tasks][6] (Vol. 3, p. 3).

* * * *

When we were about to go to Hội An, I saw many masts in the port. Someone told me that they were ships, with rice for transport [to Thuận Hóa], waiting for the wind.

[The army was so well disciplined that] whenever the bronze drum was beaten, the soldiers who were cooking on board ran back to their station on the ship, no matter whether they had eaten their food or whether they had cooked it and were just ready to eat (Vol. 3, p. 7).

* * * *

Hội An was an international port, with a street following the course of the river for three to four *li* [1.5-2 kilometres] named Dà Táng Jie [Great Tang street, today's Trần Phú street]. The people who lived along this street were all people from Fujian, with clothes of the Ming style. The women were very good at trade, so the traders who came here all tended to marry a local woman to help them with their trading. There was a bridge at the end of street named Japanese Bridge.

[5]Here Da Shan imagines that the Vietnamese word for rice derives from the Chinese word (*gan*) for sweet or delicious.

[6]In Chinese thinking, 'inside' tasks [*nei*] were proper for women, and 'outside' tasks [*wai*] for men.

One village here, called Cẩm Phố village, lay across the river from Trà Nhiêu village, the place where ships lay at anchor.[7]

It was a crowded town bustling with activities. Fish, shrimps, vegetables and fruits came in endless streams. Medicines and vegetables or fruits in season which could not be obtained from Thuận Hóa could be bought here (Vol. 4, p. 9).

[7]Cẩm Phố and Trà Nhiêu are both islands within the mouth of the Sông Thu Bồn.

7. DESCRIPTION OF COCHINCHINA, 1749-50

VOYAGE DE PIERRE POIVRE EN COCHINCHINE [PIERRE POIVRE'S JOURNEY TO COCHINCHINA]

Translated by Kristine Alilunas-Rodgers[1]

Pierre Poivre (1719-1786) was born in Lyon into a family of silk merchants. During his first stay in the East, he had spent some time as a novice in Cochinchina (1742-43) with the French Société des Missions Etrangères. *Leaving that missionary society, he traded for a time in Macao and Canton, where he profited from meeting Jacques O'Friell, an Irishman eager to involve the French in Cochinchina.*

Returning from China, Poivre lost his right forearm in a naval battle in 1745, and subsequently spent five months in Batavia, where he acquired an appreciation for the cultivation of spices by the Dutch. As a result of the amputation, Poivre was subsequently obliged to use a secretary's services, although he also learnt to write with his left hand.

Poivre had addressed in 1744 a 'Mémoire sur la Cochinchine' (Report on Cochinchina) to the French East India Company proposing the setting up of a French commercial establishment in Cochinchina.[2] His proposals largely accepted, Poivre left Lorient in October 1748 on board the Montaran, *stopping first in Ile de France (Mauritius), where he boarded the* Sumatra, *and then Pondicherry, where the* Machault, *a 600-tonner belonging to the Company, was placed at his disposal.*

[1]Translated from 'Voyage de Pierre Poivre en Cochinchine. Description de la Cochinchine (1749-1750). Voyage du vaisseau de la Compagnie le "Machault", à la Cochinchine en 1749 et 1750', *Revue de l'Extrême-Orient*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1885, pp. 81-121. Extracted from Archives des Colonies, *Colonies - Extrême-Orient - Cochinchine*, 1748-1750, no. 2).

[2]1744. Mémoire sur la Cochinchine', attributed to Pierre Poivre, *Revue de l'Extrême Orient*, vol. 2, juillet-septembre 1884, pp. 324-37. This volume published the reports and letters relating to Cochinchina, written between 1686 and 1748, contained in Archives de la Marine et des Colonies, *Colonies - Extrême-Orient - Cochinchine*, 1686-1748, no. 1. Many of them relate to the plans for Poivre's 1749-50 voyage to Cochinchina.

Figure 6. Portrait of Pierre Poivre. Reproduced by the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences of Mauritius from the original portrait in the society's possession.

Poivre arrived in Đa Nẵng on 29 August 1749. After a little more than five months in Cochinchina, the Machault *set sail on 11 February 1750 for Mauritius, where it arrived on 10 April 1750.*

Poivre's mission was a double one: overtly, to further French trade in Cochinchina, and covertly, to obtain seedlings and carry them to Mauritius. Poivre succeeded in bringing pepper, cinnamon and other seedlings to Mauritius, and was later to break the Dutch monopoly on nutmeg and clove.

On his return to France in 1757, Poivre received a bonus of 20,000 livres from the French government. He was later given letters of nobility by Louis XV, and became Intendant du Roi *(Superintendent of Public Business) of Mauritius and Réunion.*

Poivre's travels were all of interest, and many of his reports have been published.[3] *The negative views he and his companions expressed about the arbitrary and venal government of Cochinchina should be seen in the context of even harsher judgements of other Asian societies. Siam, in particular, he perceived as a 'frightful tyranny' which destroyed any initiative in its people.*[4] *The contrast between his views and enthusiastic seventeenth-century accounts exemplified by Christophoro Borri is an indication of the disillusion with Asia in general which tended to mark European literature from Louis le Comte (1698) through to James Mill (1817).*[5]

[3]In addition to those mentioned elsewhere, these include:
'Relation abrégée des voyages faits par le sieur [Poivre]. Pour le service de la Compagnie des Indes. Depuis 1748 jusqu'en 1757', ed. Henri Cordier, *Revue de l'Histoire des Colonies Françaises*, 1st trimester 1918.
Voyages d'un philosophe, ou observations sur les moeurs et les arts des peuples de l'Afrique, de l'Asie et de l'Amérique, Yverdon, 1768 (published without Poivre's permission); 2nd edition (Lyons, 1769) including two 'Discours' made by Poivre in Mauritius; 3rd edition (Paris, c.1794) including 'Discours', and 'Notice sur la vie de M. Poivre' by Du Pont de Nemours. The 'Notice' is reprinted in *Bullétin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises*, n.s., vol. 7, no. 3, 1932, pp. 15-62.
Oeuvres complettes de P. Poivre, Intendant des Isles de France et de Bourbon, correspondant de l'Académie des Sciences, etc., précédées de sa vie et accompagnées de notes, Paris, 1797. It includes 'Notice', les *Voyages d'un philosophe*, the two 'Discours', a report and a letter by Poivre as well as excerpts from other authors.
Un manuscrit inédit de Pierre Poivre: Les mémoires d'un voyageur, ed. Louis Malleret, Paris, 1968 (recounting Poivre's travels in 1745, 1746 and 1747).
See also: Louis Malleret, *Pierre Poivre*, Paris, 1974; M. Ly-Tio-Fane, *Mauritius and the Spice Trade: the Odyssey of Pierre Poivre*, Port Louis, Mauritius, 1958; Yves Laissus, 'Note sur les manuscrits de Pierre Poivre (1719-1786) conservés à la Bibliothèque Centrale du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences of Mauritius*, vol. 4, part 2, 1973, pp. 31-56.
[4]Pierre Poivre, *Un manuscrit inédit*, Paris, 1968, p. 57.
[5]This has been well demonstrated recently by Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology and the Ideologies of Western Dominance*, Ithaca, 1989.

In addition to this 'Description', two other accounts of Poivre's journey to Cochinchina in 1749-50 exist:

(i) Poivre's own journal 'Voyage de Pierre Poivre en Cochinchine. (Suite). Journal d'un voyage à la Cochinchine depuis le 29 aoust 1749, jour de notre arrivée, jusqu'au 11 février 1750';[6] *and*

(ii) a journal attributed to Laurens (or Laurent), supercargo of the Machault *('Journal de voyage fait à la Cochinchine pour la Compagnie des Indes [octobre 1748 à avril 1750]').*[7]

Although the present 'Description' had been attributed to Poivre, two references to 'Monsieur Poivre' in the third person (see below) indicate an author other than Poivre, as do the differing accounts of the gifts presented to the king related in the 'Journal' and the 'Description'.[8] *Malleret's latest opinion on the matter attributed the 'Description' to an unidentified ship's officer aboard the* Machault.[9] *We have chosen to translate this particular piece as it provides a succinct summary of the information contained in these French accounts written between 1744 and 1750.*

Authors and Travellers who have written about Cochinchina

We owe the discovery of Cochinchina to the old Portuguese navigators. They travelled up and down the coastline and made useful observations, but set up no establishment there. The interior of the country and of much of the continent has long been unknown; it is only through the accounts of a few missionaries who made their way inland that we have gained acquaintance with it. The most highly regarded one is that of Father Alexandre de Rhodes, a missionary Jesuit in

[6]Published in *Revue de l'Extrême-Orient*, vol. 3, 1885, pp. 364-510. Henceforth referred to as 'Journal'.
[7]See Malleret, *Pierre Poivre*, Paris, 1974, p. 117.
[8]Poivre was accompanied on his voyage by four gentlemen: Laurent (or Laurens, supercargo of the *Machault*); Drouet; and two 'Enfants de Langue', Gracian (or Gratian) and Delaunay de la Mellière (or Mellières). As well, Clouet (possibly a copyist's rendering of Drouet) and Honoré Lieutaud, ship's surgeon, are also mentioned. All except Laurent were to be kept ignorant of the secret spice mission: see Document 'X' (one of several memoranda attributed to Pierre Poivre relating to plans for his mission), *Revue de l'Extrême-Orient*, vol. 2, juillet-septembre 1884, p. 385; and 'The Company's Instructions to David, 30th September 1748' in Ly-Tio-Fane, *Mauritius and the Spice Trade*, Mauritius, 1958, pp. 42-5. Poivre alludes to 'the writer Gravier', presumably a copyist's mistaken rendering of Gracian or Gratian ('Journal', p. 420).
Poivre left Đa Nẵng on 18 September with two officers from the ship and the surgeon from the factory and arrived in Huế on 22 September. The next day Poivre and his officers were received by the king ('Journal', pp. 370-7), and one of these gentlemen managed to ride the horse presented to the king by the Company (see below, and note 16).
[9]Malleret, *Pierre Poivre*, Paris, 1974, p. 127, note 3, p. 158. Louis Malleret had first attributed the text to Laurent (see Poivre, *Un manuscrit inédit*, Paris, 1968, p. 1). But Laurent remained behind in Đa Nẵng and Hội An while Poivre and his other officers were in Huế ('Journal', pp. 383 ff.).

Cochinchina.[10] It is written in a simple style but which seems to speak the language of truth. The Abbé Guyon refers to Cochinchina in his *Histoire des Indes Orientales anciennes et modernes*, published in Paris in 1744, volume II, on page 468, but quotes only an excerpt from Father Alexandre de Rhode's account. In his *Journal du voyage de Siam*, the Abbé Choisy says only a few words about [Cochinchina] from accounts by the Siamese.[11] If brilliance could take the place of truth, the account of Cochinchina by Camoëns [Camões], author of the epic poem *Lusiade [The Lusiads]*, would be preferred, but the truth, which ought to be the basis of it, is so merged with the fantastic that it can hardly be perceived. The curious will perhaps be more satisfied with *l'Histoire générale des voyages*, translated from the English by the Abbé Prévost, the first quarto volume of which was published in Paris on a subscription basis in 1745. This work, which is the fruit of research by a society of scholars who have drawn on the most exact and sought-after journals, has a convincing truthfulness. In future issues these avid scholars will no doubt clarify all that can be clarified, regarding not only the interior of Cochinchina and of the entire continent, but also other parts of the world which we know only by name.

An Abridged History of Cochinchina

Cochinchina was once a province of China, as were Tongking, Champa, [and] great and lesser Laos.[12] The invasion of this vast empire by the Tartars provided an opportunity for several peoples to regain their freedom. The Tongkinese were the first to take advantage of it, and from these last the Cochinchinese are descended. Here is what I have learned about their origin.

About 180 years ago, say the Cochinchinese, there was a prodigious number of Chinese in Tongking who took up arms to seize the country. They scored several victories which so alarmed the king of Tongking that he took flight. One of his generals or mandarins, a courageous and enterprising man, took charge of a troop of determined men, defeated the Chinese and chased them from the kingdom. He restored peace to the state and returned the king to his throne, who in gratitude made the mandarin Cou-ha [Quôc Công] or mayor of the palace, that

[10] Alexandre de Rhodes, *Voyages et missions en la Chine et autres royaumes de l'Orient*, Paris, 1653. Translated by S. Hertz as *Rhodes of Viet Nam: The Travels and Missions of Father Alexander de Rhodes in China and Other Kingdoms of the Orient*, Westminster, Maryland, 1966.

[11] Abbé de Choisy, *Journal du Voyage de Siam fait en 1685 et 1686*, Paris, 1687; facsimile republication, Paris, 1930.

[12] The Lao Kingdom broke up after the death of Surinyavongsa, around 1694, into separate kingdoms of Vientiane, Luang Prabang and Champassak.

is, the second highest person in the kingdom.[13] He bestowed on this dignity[14] an authority equal to his own and made it hereditary in the mandarin's family. There were several Cou-has or mayors of the palace in this family whose greatness and power grew to such an extent that the king subsequently feared for his crown. Two sides emerged in the kingdom and waged a cruel war against one another for several years. But finally Cou-ha was defeated and forced to leave Tongking. The mandarin along with what remained of his followers reached the banks of a river separating Tongking from Cochinchina and which today still marks the boundary of both kingdoms. As he was preparing to cross the river, he was attacked by the king's troops. So Cou-ha and his soldiers, having no resources left but their derring-do, fought like mad men and drove back the king's troops. After this victory they crossed over the river in a single boat from the country, and the story has it that Cou-ha gave the boatman five *quan*, or about twenty *livres*, which was what remained of his fortune. They entered Cochinchina which they call Hanam [Annam], fought the natives of the country called the Lohes,[15] and drove them into the mountains where they are today and pay tribute to the king of Cochinchina.

Cou-ha took up residence in Huhay [Huế], which is the name of the capital city and of the province, and means 'Delightful Country' in Cochinchinese. It is in fact a great, well-treed plain watered by a fine river divided into several channels which render it fertile in rice and all sorts of fruits.

Since the time they were separated these two peoples have waged cruel wars on one another. They have neither links nor dealings with each other and put one another to death when they capture each other whether in peace or at war. It is even forbidden to utter the word Tongking before the king of Cochinchina. Yet however great the loathing between these two peoples, who speak the same language and have the same customs, they hold each other in high esteem. The Cochinchinese pride themselves on being descended from the Tongkinese whom they loathe. It is the only nation of which they speak highly; they scorn all the others and above all the Chinese.

The descendants of this first Cou-ha have kept the name as well as the claims to the dignity of mayor of the palace of Tongking. It has been only a few years since the king who reigns today took the name Vou-ha [Vua], meaning king. The prince took advantage of the civil wars and famine which have devastated

[13] The title 'Hủng Quốc Công' was used only by Nguyễn Kim (died 1545), the father of Nguyễn Hoàng (r. 1558-1613). The author has either confused the Trịnh of Tongking with Chinese, or is referring to the civil wars of the sixteenth century between the Mạc and the Lê which led to the departure of Nguyễn Hoàng (the author's Cou-ha) for the south in 1558.

[14] *Dignité*: a high rank, office or position, or a legal title of nobility or honour.

[15] 'Lohes' is the term used by the Vietnamese for the Cham; see Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China*, London, 1828, p. 467.

Tongking for several years to take this title. Yet, according to an old custom or for reasons of state, the king of Cochinchina has his decrees and edicts dated from the reign of the kings of Tongking.

The King

Yïou Goüvon, the tenth king or Cou-ha reigning today, is between thirty-six and forty years old.[16] This prince is handsome although a bit fat. He has quite even features, an aquiline nose, handsome eyes and a lighter complexion than ordinary Cochinchinese.

He has a pleasant tone of voice and an open manner in everything he says, but he is not very witty. During the visits which I had the honour of making him with Monsieur Poivre, he seemed to me surprised at the slightest trifles. He looked us over from head to toe, made us walk and turn round and round, laughed at our bearing and our movements and looked admiringly at the little belongings which we had with us. Among other questions, he had the interpreter ask us why we did not let our beards and fingernails grow; whether the King of France had long fingernails painted red and black teeth, as he himself did. After a thousand questions of this sort he invited us to dine and left us to go and sit at the table. He came back an hour later to see us eat. We were served a dinner composed of rice, a few pieces of chopped pork and beef, with a curry of overly salted and spiced kid [or doe], the lot served in dirty, repelling little dishes of crude porcelain, with little sticks according to the custom of the country. Our clumsiness in using them made him burst out in laughter several times and greatly amused him. After dinner, which lasted no more than an hour, a part of the presents from the King of France — that is, from the Company — was brought in, whose use he was not acquainted with. It was a telescope which we had a great deal of trouble in setting up, [such that] we could not even find the focus, because the objects which could determine it were not far enough away. Next, one of the two horses which had been taken on board at Pondichery was brought in, and upon it was put the magnificent saddle which we had brought. I mounted and rode it about the large courtyard opposite the palace. The king appeared to me to be pleased, but he found that for its height the horse's legs were too slender, and its head too small. After a few remarks of this sort he sent us away, inviting us to come and see him often.

The prince is a kind-hearted man and has no liking for blood. I was told that this was less out of virtue than religious prepossession. He believes that the days he grants those who have earned the death penalty are years which he adds to his

[16]Nguyễn Phúc Khoát (r. 1738-1765) took the title Hiếu Quốc Công and was also referred to as Võ Vương. He was the eighth Nguyễn king.

own. Whatever his manner of thinking may be, he is regarded as being lenient. The example which follows will show.

Four or five years ago, four thousand Tongkinese, dying of hunger, came and surrendered to the Cochinchinese mandarin who is in command of the fortress situated on the banks of the river separating Tongking from Cochinchina. They said that their country was racked by famine and civil wars, that the people wanted a new government and that if the king wanted to lead them, they would place him on the throne of Tongking. The mandarin, who ought to have put them to death, according to the barbaric custom established between these two peoples, stayed the execution in order to send news of this circumstance to the king. Father Siebert, a Jesuit who was living at that time, obtained a pardon for them. At his request the king had rice brought to them, had them thanked for their goodwill, and sent them back home.

This good quality is overshadowed by many vices and failings. The prince is vain, ignorant, lazy, miserly, superstitious and much given to women. He has a harem of three hundred concubines which he seldom leaves. The kingdom's affairs are of little concern to him; he leaves them to three or four mandarins who abuse the authority he gives them and tyrannize the people. His sordid miserliness renders all dignities venal, making them less signs of honour and a reward for merit than leave to pillage the ordinary people, who are always miserable. Besides the inordinate tributes which they pay to the king, they are weighed down by the exactions of the mandarins and provincial governors. Justice is slow, hard to obtain and costly. The complaints of the unfortunate cannot reach the foot of the throne; the path is barred by greed. There is no death penalty attaching to crime, no matter how outrageous it is. The rich buy their way out and the poor discharge their debt [to society] by being placed in a *cangue* [stocks]. Private opulence is a crime before this prince; when a mandarin has enriched himself by plundering the common people, it is only by giving [the prince] most of his property that he can save the rest, [and so be] happy when [the prince] does not take everything away as a very distinguished mark of favour. He uses even the most shameful expedients to accumulate his riches. I was told of a trick of his which is very characteristic of his miserliness.

He learned that a great mandarin with whom he had reason to be pleased had made a fortune in business. He sought for a long while the means to make him blameworthy but, forced to acknowledge his uprightness, a rare thing indeed in this country, he called him to his palace, humoured him more than usual and told him: 'I have learned that your cocks are said to be the best in my kingdom. I

would like to see them fight with mine, and I bet you thirty *nains* [*nén*][17] or bars of gold that yours will be beaten.' The mandarin, whose cocks were not very seasoned, tremblingly accepted the bet; to have refused would have been a crime. The cocks fought, but the mandarin's were beaten, and the king sent him away, allowing him to seek a revenge match.

The Court

The court follows the king's lead. All the mandarins steal and do so with impunity. Their greed is so great that they do not even seek to keep up appearances. They steal boorishly; yet knowing how to steal in any manner whatsoever is for them a sign of a distinguished upbringing.

When we arrived, the king wanted to see the wares which the Company had for sale. They were all sent to him. He bought some items; but when it came to our taking back what remained, they had passed through so many hands that not half of them were to be found. A complaint was made to the king, who ordered his mandarins to return them, which they most certainly did not do. Even the king, in unparalleled bad faith, refused under various pretexts to pay for those which he had bought. Thus almost everything was lost.

The mandarins and eunuchs are slaves who servilely worship the prince. They are the agents of his pleasures rather than the dispensers of his authority. They have neither integrity nor morals. The most shameful positions are the steps by which they climb up to the dignities which the slightest whim of the prince can take away from them. Their outward greatness ends in having a few soldiers who are often the prince's spies. Some of these mandarins are considered to be less ignorant than the ordinary people. The learning of those who are called lettered consists in knowing and commenting on the religion of Confucius, the history of the kings and the Mandarin language, but there are hardly ten learned men of this sort to be found in the whole kingdom. Besides, because of the king's ignorance and miserliness, merit is stripped of those rewards which are the inspiration for emulation. The politics of the court amount to obtaining the prince's favour, back-stabbing and a few harem intrigues.

The King's Wealth

The king of Cochinchina fancies himself the richest and greatest monarch in the world. He goes by the title Vou-ha Tellhoye [*Vua Trời*], which means king of the heavens, and he has pagodas where he is worshipped. His mandarins and the

[17] One *nên* is roughly equivalent to ten *tael*. 30 *nên* corresponds to approximately 300 *tael* or 11.3 kilograms of gold.

common people raise their hands heavenwards while uttering his name and call him heavenly words.

This prince has, it is said, a great deal of gold, silver, calambac or eaglewood, raw ivory and tutenag,[18] which is the substance used for making cash, the currency of the country. Besides the taxes which he derives from Cochinchina, the kings of Cambodia, Champa and great and lesser Laos pay him tribute. It is only a few years since the Cochinchinese have subjugated Cambodia which provides plentiful supplies of rice and a great deal of building timber.

The King's Palaces

The king has three palaces, two of which are on the banks of the river. The largest one is the one where he spends the autumn. It is surrounded by a wall fifteen to eighteen *pieds* [five to six metres] high forming an even square with a circumference of perhaps a *lieue* [4 kilometres]. Porchways or covered arcades extend around the wall, supported by evenly spaced wooden pillars, between which are placed cannons. Although their architecture is simple, these four facades form a pleasing whole, and the exterior prompts one to form a favourable opinion of the interior. But once inside, everything is different. The place where the king received us was a barn at ground level, roughly plastered with clay inside and out, with no [floor] boards and exceedingly dirty. The only furnishing or embellishing was the king's throne or arm-chair, lacquered red, gilded, and carved tolerably well. The other buildings making up this palace are almost all made of wood, with no upper rooms and very dark, set out with no [sense of] proportion or rule of distance, comprising a welter which presents to the eye nothing but an unsightly jumble. Nevertheless I was told by Monsieur Poivre, who was allowed by the king to visit the interior of the palace, that the apartments were handsome, albeit in the style of the country, that lacquer, carving and gilding were artfully and judiciously arranged, that the furnishings were opulent and the gardens magnificent; in short, that this palace greatly resembled that of the king of China which Father Duhalde, a Jesuit, describes in his *Histoire de la Chine*.

The second palace, which is smaller, is built on a height a little removed from the river and has only one wing which overlooks the water. Here the king spends the winter or rainy season which lasts four months.

The third palace is the one called the water palace. It is the king's summer abode. It is on the river and built on two pontoons or floating stages, upon which

[18] Tutenag: properly zinc (spelter). The term was also used to designate 'paktong' (properly cupro-nickel, or nickel-brass, known also as 'white copper'), an alloy of copper, zinc and nickel (Joseph Needham with Lu Gwei-Djen, *Science and Civilisation in China*, London, 1974, Vol. 5, part II, section 33, pp. 212-230).

is set a very well-designed wooden frame or woodwork, forming a gondola with taffrails, perhaps eighty *pieds* [26 metres] long. It is lacquered red and black and tastefully gilt. A finely carved gallery extends all around it. This building [or ship] is made up of rooms which can be put up and taken down in little time. It is an elegant bauble whose oddity makes it pleasing and the only building in all of Cochinchina worthy of any attention.

The Militia

The elite of the king's soldiers makes up the palace guard, guarding both inside and outside. They form two companies, each of a hundred men, called the Golden Swords and the Silver Swords. This militia is the first in the kingdom and the most distinguished; these are the bodyguards who never leave the king's side and who carry out his orders. In the first audience which this prince granted us they were drawn up in battle formation, with swords drawn, forming a sight which had something grand and majestic about it. Their clothing is a sort of flowered black silk or gauze *domino* [cape, or loosely fitting mantle or tunic], with an insignia in red satin front and back, where there are Cochinchinese letters embroidered in gold and silver. They wear small round hats, lacquered red and wrought with gold and silver filigree, ending in a tinplate or beaten copper point. Their shoes are half-boots of quilted white satin, with a cord brocaded in gold around the knee-piece, and flat shoes or slippers revealing the instep. They all have long beards and most notably moustaches which they carefully groom. Their swords are long and sharp, with no cross guard on the hilt. The scabbard is lacquered red and covered on both ends with a thin gold or silver plate about eight *pouces* [22 cm] long. A cord, running through rings attached at both ends, is used for slinging the sword across the shoulder. These soldiers are poorly fed and even more poorly paid. They waste away in slavery until the whim of the prince raises them to some dignity.

The rest of the militia is not worth any attention. It serves in times of war and shows no discipline in times of peace. The use of firearms is practically unknown. In times of war the soldiers are handed a few matchlocks from China, and a bit of sulphur and saltpetre for making their own powder. Since Cambodia was conquered the king's troops have increased. I was told the prince could raise an army of sixty thousand men.

The Artillery

The king has twelve hundred cannons, all made of bronze, around his palace. They include much field artillery of different calibres, bearing the coats of arms of Spain and Portugal, but especially four culverins, nineteen *pieds* [six metres]

long, which bear the coat of arms of Cochinchina, and are exquisitely beautiful. On them are dragons, which are the king's coat of arms, sphinxes, finely wrought leopards, and a hand which looks absolutely true to life, holding a thunderbolt and fiery shafts with this motto: *Ostendunt tela parentem* [They display spears for the ancestors]. They are [mounted] on carriages made of a wood as black as ebony, with open work and an inlay of double-gilt copper. Almost all of the other artillery is [mounted] on *repiquets* or roughly made wooden cross pieces. The date when these cannons were founded is from 1650 until 1660, and the [metal] founder's name is abbreviated.

This fine artillery is the work of the Portuguese. During the time when this nation was creating an establishment in Macao, then the object of all of its care, several vessels were sent there every year with talented people of all sorts [on board], but above all founders. Some of these vessels were lost on the coasts of Cochinchina. Those who were saved offered their services to the king who then ruled and who had them found the cannons which can be seen today.

The Cochinchinese take no notice, or are unaware, of what could make this artillery useful. None of the cannons has got six shots to fire and most of the cannonballs are not of the right calibre.

The Navy

A foreigner who had seen only the galleys of the king would be inclined to form a favourable opinion of Cochinchina, although they seem to be designed more for pleasure than business; they are the work of art and good taste. They are exceptional and have flat floor timbers. The finest I was shown during my stay in the capital has forty-eight oars and is eighty *pieds* [26 metres] long. There is red lacquer to the water line, and all of the outside of the galley is black. These two lacquers are shiny and smooth like a looking glass. A carved rope, lacquered red and gilt, extends all around [the boat], contrasting very pleasantly with the black. At the stern is a finely decorated taffrail beneath which is the master's seat, which looks down over all the rest. At the bow is a poop [deck] or chamber seven or eight *pieds* [around 2.5 metres] in height and as much in width, which has four doors which slide open and shut. The woodwork is handsome and the gilding and lacquer are tastefully arranged. At the prow is an elephant's head which looks true to life thanks to the delicate carving and the clever blending of the gold and lacquer. The planks are of a piece and fitted so precisely that no seam is to be seen. But the inside of the galley does not reflect the standard of the outside. The deck or upper deck, [which] is raised by hatches [movable planking], is roughly made and poorly fitted. The rowlocks are made of [a softwood resembling] fir or pine and bamboo, making an unpleasant contrast.

The oarsmen or rowers are naked. They have only a langooty [loincloth] of black crepe, a band of horsehair around their heads, and their hair wound up into a ball on the crown [of their heads]. They row standing up and listen very closely to the commands of the master which they all repeat together. They are arranged by class and are drilled very often. The crew or oarsmen haul the galley from the water and carry it on their shoulders to the slipway where [the galleys] are covered and carefully maintained. They never go out except with the king [on board]. I have seen this prince return from fishing with all his galleys. They went like the wind and were a delightful sight.

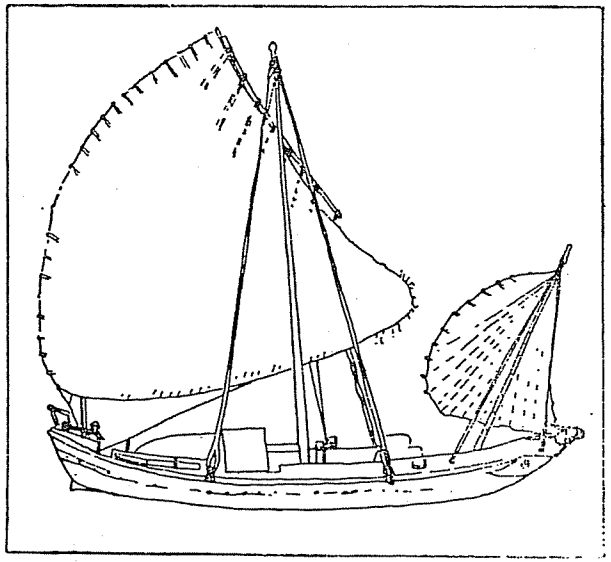


Figure 7. *Ghe mành* sailboat of Cửa Lò. Reproduced from P. Huard and H. Durand, *Connaissance du Việt-nam*, Hanoi, 1954, p. 231.

The second fleet is comprised of fishing boats which never go out of sight of land. [The sailors] have no rules for navigation and are not acquainted with the compass. They take advantage of the monsoons to sail to Cambodia and to places where they carry on trade, but always hugging the coast. Their boats are flat and have no curves. They are bound together with rattan and all the parts are fastened with wedges driven between the sheathing and the floor planks. The sails look more or less like ears. They are made with bamboo arranged in spokes interwoven with leaves. When they are hoisted up or lowered they make the same noise as a fan which is opened or shut. These boats sail well and catch the wind well. There are 100-tonners and 150-tonners. As a rule they leak a lot because of wormholes which gain a hold and because of the Cochinchinese ignorance of caulking. They are even less acquainted with the use of pumps and are often drowned for want of the precautions necessary for safe sailing.

I have heard that the king sent several vessels every year to the Paracel [Islands] to look for natural curios for his collection. I doubt that this term should be applied to the few branches of black coral, the very ordinary shells, and the few pieces of mother-of-pearl which I was shown.

Fortifications

There is only one fortress in the kingdom, on the bank of the river separating Tongking from Cochinchina. It is guarded by two hundred soldiers. It is a square wall surrounded by a moat, with embrasures where there is artillery. According to the description I was given of it, it greatly resembles the Dolphin Fort in Madagascar.

Laws

The will of the sovereign is the underlying law of the kingdom. All others are subject to whim and change. Under the first kings, theft, murder, arson, etc., were punished by death. The greed of the prince ruling today has imposed fines [on these crimes] to his benefit. Killing a man costs twelve hundred *quan*, cutting off his arm costs two hundred, and [so on] proportionally for all the parts of the body. Thus whosoever is rich can defy justice and the laws. The result of crimes going unpunished is the tyranny of the great over the people who groan in the deepest destitution. These poor wretches can scarcely eke out their subsistence from the fertility of the country. The prince overburdens them with taxes beyond their means, and the mandarins with extortion and corvée duties. Consequently it is observed that the kingdom loses people every day. Many Cochinchinese leave their native land to go and live on neighbouring islands; others escape to the

mountains of Cambodia and go as far away as the kingdom of Siam. I have been told that some were as far away as the island of Pulo-Condor [Đao Côn Lôn].

The laws established for the community are less tyrannical, but they are more favourable to women than to men. When a man marries, he marries his master. His wife orders him about and the law shields her from the man's mistreatment. There would be less danger in fighting a hundred men were this possible than in ill-treating a woman. Everything is on her side: the king, customs, and presumptions. A woman who has been maltreated by a man lies down in front of the doorway or in the middle of the street and covers her face. Then her relatives congregate and go and fetch the mandarin, who is obliged to go and set the woman back on her feet. He questions her and looks carefully to see if any blood has been shed and if the woman has any blows about the head. If these two aggravating circumstances are found to be true, the man is obliged to give a sum [of money] to the woman, and if he refuses or if he cannot pay her, he is condemned to the stocks for a considerable while.

Nevertheless the law seems to have made provision for the men's freedom by entitling them to divorce, [an option] not granted to women without the consent of their spouse. When a husband wishes to repudiate his wife he notifies the mandarin who comes to his home. The couple's relatives and friends are invited to a banquet. After setting out his reasons, the husband takes a cash [coin] which he breaks, giving half of it to his wife. This is the act of separation and the sign of the freedom which both parties give each other to contract [marriage] elsewhere. Their goods are shared equally. If there is only one child, it is for the husband, if there are three he must take two of them, and so on for larger numbers.

Having more than one wife is allowed. A man may take as many as he can feed. The wife who has committed adultery is punished by death. She is put along with a pig into a sack and thrown into the river. The women of the harem are crushed underfoot by elephants assigned to this.

[Provincial] Governors

The government of the provinces is awarded in accordance with money, not merit or service. There is no revenue attached to the dignities other than the freedom to steal. The governors are in place in order to collect taxes and hand down justice. They are accountable to the king for the tribute of the province which they govern. They have mandarins and soldiers whom they send to the aldeas [villages] where they exact [the tribute] with extraordinary severity. Moreover, tribute is imposed arbitrarily. A man who according to the law and his condition need pay the king

only three *quan* a year will pay six by dint of harassment from the mandarins. It is their income and that of their officers.

Justice

Justice is no better administered than finance. When a man is accused the mandarin inquires about his possessions. If he is rich, he is [declared] guilty and condemned to pay a considerable fine.

In each village or aldea, and along the rivers and highways, there is a mandarin or customs officer to collect the king's duties. As it costs them a great deal to obtain these positions and they are not sure of occupying them for long, they are in a hurry to enrich themselves.

Law and Order

Public security is maintained less by good policing than by the timidity of the Cochinchinese. They would be formidable were they as bold as they are rapacious; but they are fearful and fear nothing so much as weapons. As stealing is what they apply themselves to, it is also what spurs them to act.

They sell using short weights, cheat in business and arrange a few bad deals for foreigners in order to extract money from them. Keeping law and order does not eliminate these abuses. In the bazaars each merchant has his own weight and particular measure which he increases or decreases to his advantage. In a word, business is determined by caprice and deceit.

The Arts

Those above the ordinary run of people like the mandarins can read, write and do arithmetic, but they are not acquainted with mathematics, painting, music, medicine and all that which is known as the fine arts.

The first mathematician in Cochinchina was Father Siebert, a Jesuit, [who has been] dead for several years and who has left no pupils.

Painting

Paintings and good drawings come from China or are executed by the Chinese who are in this country. The Cochinchinese draw in [Indian] ink but sloppily and unimaginatively.

Music

The term music can scarcely be used to describe the croaking of the Cochinchinese. Their voices are hoarse and nasal. Their singing has no

variations in tempo and does not follow any rules of harmony. It is a jarring quivering of the gullet, which has no modulation and which cannot be termed anything other than hullabaloo.

They have bamboo guitars, cobbled together and muted, which emit a shrill sound. I have seen flutes like German flutes but with no keys and consequently no semitones. They play poorly and their lip position is wrong.

Medicine

What goes by the name of medicine amounts to decocting a few herbs gathered at random, which ignorant people prescribe for all sorts of ailments. They also have a lot of dried leaves which they decoct. All of these remedies are very inexpensive, and the dearest costs only four cash. They are completely unacquainted with surgical operations. A man who breaks an arm or a leg is much to be pitied if nature does not perform a miracle in his favour.

Mechanical Arts

The means of procuring the things most essential to life appear to be beyond the comprehension of the Cochinchinese. Although their country produces silk and cotton, they hardly know how to clothe themselves. They make little fabrics of silk for their own use, loosely woven, poorly dyed, and very narrow. It has been only for the last two or three years that they have [begun to] imitate Chinese satins and small damasks; but as [the Cochinchinese] do not know how to clean and prepare silk, they are nearly all defective. I have seen some pieces in the Peking style, of second-rate quality, rather well cleaned, but full of defects owing to the poor matching of several different qualities of silk. As the mechanism of their looms is poorly designed, they require a considerable time to finish a piece. Besides, they do not know how to give gloss and finish to their fabrics which always have an unpleasant look about them. The dyes are not attractive because they do not know how to prepare them. It is rare to see a piece dyed uniformly, especially in bright colours.

They work gold and silver tolerably well and engrave well enough. I was shown a silver snuff-box inlaid with gold, [executed] with much precision and refinement, but it lacked a finished polish and the hinge was poorly made.

I have been told that the Cochinchinese surpass the Chinese in carving and woodworking in general, but that the latter were the better when it comes to variety and taste. It is true that the Cochinchinese are not imaginative. Their sterile imagination is easily exhausted and is hardly amenable to the taste and application necessary to attain perfection. Thus it is unusual to see anything finished, of whatever sort it may be. Besides, emulation is not encouraged by

rewards; on the contrary, a man who has talent is afraid of becoming conspicuous. If he is well known, the king or the mandarins will enlist his services his whole life long, and he has no reward to expect from his talent other than poverty and slavery.

Capital Cities

Huay [Huế] is the capital of the kingdom. It is situated on a fine plain surrounded by mountains and cut across by a large river which disappears into the sea four *lieues* [20 kilometres] away. It is less a city than a mass of bamboo huts, poorly constructed and set haphazardly on either side of the river. The streets are narrow and flooded during the wet season. The Chinese quarter is the tidiest. The houses are built in the style of those of China and form a wide, well-paved street. The outskirts of the city are well treed, but above all the banks of the river could be the site of great beauty if the Cochinchinese had any taste in building. I noted natural waterfalls which, were the flow of the water skilfully managed, would make very fine hydraulic machines.

It seems to be a populous city. It numbers sixty thousand inhabitants, including the bargemen whose *champans* [sampans] or boats cover the river and constitute a second town.

The second and only other city is Fai-fo [Hội An], fifteen or eighteen *lieues* [60 to 70 kilometres] from Huhay [Huế]. It is a port for Chinese *sommes* [junks] and local boats. Vessels from Europe can anchor in the harbour in the fine season; but when the monsoon comes, they are obliged to go and anchor in the Bay of Turon [Đà Nẵng] four *lieues* [16 kilometres] away where they are safe. Fai-fo is the place in Cochinchina where the most trade takes place during the season. It is the depository for all the merchandise from China and the country. This small city is densely populated especially by Chinese who carry on a large trade.

Customs and Practices

Nothing shows the barbarism of the Cochinchinese more than their customs and practices. They observe them quite religiously even though nearly all of these are unnatural and immoral. It is the practice for instance that girls prostitute themselves publicly. The great number of ardent admirers is proof of their worth and makes them sought after for marriage. Men, even mandarins, do not blush at presenting you with women. It is a customary act of politeness like offering you betel and tea; but in accepting it one almost always runs the risk of compromising one's health. Custom also allows stealing which the law punishes only lightly. It also allows usury which is exorbitant. A Cochinchinese will ask a hundred per

cent interest a day and will demand security well above the principal and the interest. They have countless other equally harmful customs by which they abide out of prepossession and ignorance.

The custom which gives limitless power to fathers and mothers over their children springs from nature itself. [The parents] are the masters of their [children's] conduct and their freedom. [The parents] only allow them to eat with them when [the latter] are married or of marriageable age. A father's last words are sacred. Accordingly children have a respect for them bordering on worship. It would be desirable if the Cochinchinese discharged their other social duties equally well; but they have no knowledge of true friendship which is in the soul. As they are hard-hearted, they dislike one another. They frequent one another only from distrust or self-interest. They are liars and have no kindness. They are courteous to foreigners despite holding them in contempt, but only to obtain something from them or to cheat them. They boldly ask for what they cannot steal and are not deterred by protests. Although they live in an abundance of the things necessary for life, their food is simple fare. They live on rice and salted fish which they make into curries. They eat meat only for important feasts, or when the animal dies of old age or illness. They prefer dog meat which they find to be a more dainty dish [than other meats]. They eat in a slovenly manner and often [consume] very unpleasant things.

The huts or houses of the common people are made of bamboo. Those of the great are built out of wood or stone. The front is a verandah with panels of bamboo which are fastened during the day and taken down at night. It is usually the coolest place and the room where visitors are received. The interior of the house is divided into several panelled rooms, poorly arranged and very dark. They have no furnishings other than a few crude porcelain dishes for eating and a few other implements for their personal use. Their beds are a mat which they lay on the floor in the evening and which they remove in the morning.

Their Clothing

Their clothing is made of silk and very light. It looks like that formerly worn in China. It is made up of very ample pants,[19] a shirt with open sleeves slit on the sides, and a long gown with large sleeves. They wear a head-band of horsehair around their heads with their hair tied up on top, and a large, very well-made, round hat of straw or leaves. Their shoes are quilted satin half-boots with flat slippers revealing the instep. They carry two pouches attached to a cord, in which they put betel and smoking tobacco. [The pouches] are usually made of damask and brocaded in gold and silver, and are a highly prized ornament. Private

[19] *Canesson* [*calçon*]: [under]pants.

individuals can wear whatever colour they please, except red which is the colour of the king.

Women's clothing is similar to men's. The common people wear only pants and do not dress up except on feast days.

The Cochinchinese are not tall, but they are well built. Their eyes are small, their noses flat, and there is something sinister about their physiognomy. They are a little swarthier than the Chinese. I have seen some who were as dark as negroes from Madagascar; nonetheless they are generally less so than the inhabitants of Cambodia, Champa and the mountains.

To make their teeth black they rub them with a fruit which has the property of nut gall. They smoke and chew a lot of tobacco which makes their mouths unwholesome and offensive.

The most beautiful women are in the harem of the king and the mandarins. The commoner women are quite well built and have ample bosoms. They are vivacious, shrewd, and harder workers than the men, who are cowardly and lazy. Men and women let their fingernails grow. Having them very long is a sign of distinction and affluence.

Their Occupations

Fishing is the Cochinchinese occupation. Their boats are their homes which they leave only during the rainy season. Fish are excellent and very plentiful. They have countless clever inventions for catching them. The rivers, bays and coves are full of fisheries forming mazes closed off by bamboo screens which [the people] open and shut according to the ebb and flow. Their nets are made of silk and skilfully worked. They have a lot of different kinds [or species] which are not known in Europe.

The Lie of the Land

Cochinchina is full of mountains covered with forests. The roads are difficult and dangerous especially during the rainy season because of the streams tumbling down from the mountains. Travel is inconvenient and slow. The ordinary conveyance consists of a silk net seven to eight *pieds* long by three wide [around 2.5 by one metre], fastened to both ends of a bamboo cane and with a cover shaped like a tortoise shell. It is a sort of palanquin which is not completely closed and which provides only poor shelter from rain and bad weather. Two men can easily carry it and [so] are often enough for the longest journeys. The roads are full of inns where rice and fish, arrack and fruits can be had, but a European will always be sure to eat poorly.

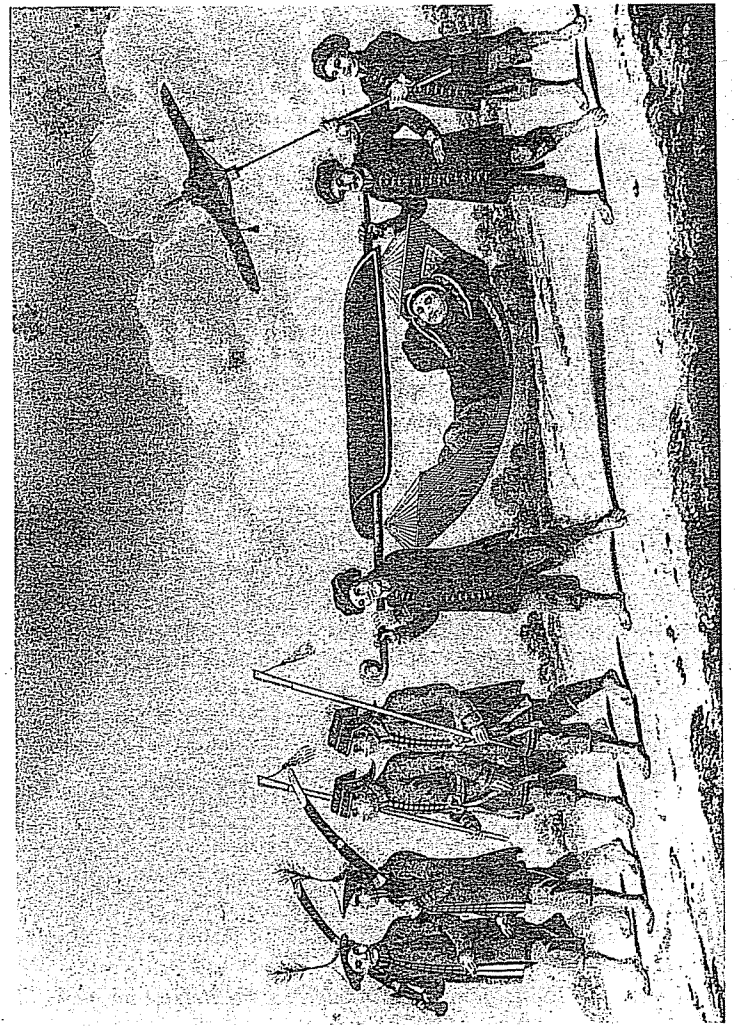


Figure 8. Usual Mode of Conveyance of the Cochinchinese Nobility, c.1820. Original drawing by an anonymous Chinese in J. Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China*, London, 1828.

Animals

All animals useful to life such as bullocks, buffaloes, kids, sheep, poultry, etc. are plentiful. There are also horses, but stocky and poorly built, which are seldom used because of the uneven lie of the land and the many rivers and marshes which intersect it. Game of all sorts is very common. The mountains provide medicinal herbs and very curious plants. A sort of cinnamon, very coarse and of mediocre quality, is gathered there. A French missionary assured me that several years ago a clove tree and a nutmeg tree had been found; but there are grounds for doubt since the local people do not know what [they are]. The small quantities of clove and nutmeg one sees are brought by the Chinese who buy [them] from the Dutch in China or Batavia.

Elephants are more common and larger than anywhere else in the East Indies. The king has quite a few which he uses in war. The way in which they are captured is more or less that related in the journal of the journey to Siam by the Abbé Choisy.[20]

There are a lot of tigers, rhinoceros, panthers, leopards, tiger-cats and very curious birds. There is one in particular which has tail feathers five to six *pieds* [two metres] long, brown and evenly speckled with white.[21] The Cochinchinese decorate their pagodas with it and recount things about it as wonderful as the story of the phoenix.

It is very hot from the month of March until October. The plentiful rains which fall during the other four months cool the air. It is the season of storms and floods, which make the country fertile and plentiful. The air is not good. The waters are swift and unwholesome. We have lost thirty men from dysenteries and malignant fevers.

The Christian Religion and the Missionaries

The French missionaries claim to be the first to have preached Christianity in Cochinchina where they were on their own for sixty years. They suffered persecutions which often stopped the budding progress of the Gospel. The last and most violent one was under the grandfather of the king who reigns today.[22] His more indulgent successors have allowed public worship which has not been interrupted since.[23] This freedom from disturbance, along with the devotion of the missionaries, has produced Christians whose numbers have increased

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[20] Abbé de Choisy, *Journal du voyage de Siam fait en 1685 et 1686*, Paris, 1687; ed. Maurice Garçon, Paris, 1930.
[21] Probably the green peacock, *Pavo muticus*.
[22] Minh Vương Nguyễn Phúc Chu (r. 1691-1725). The persecution occurred from 1698 to 1704.
[23] A new persecution, however, was launched six months after Poivre's departure.

considerably since the arrival of the Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and German missionaries. Cochinchina today numbers fifty thousand Christians and Cambodia thirty thousand. Although this is a sizable number, it is claimed the Christian religion would prevail over paganism if the missionaries from different nations acted in unison. But their conduct does not seem to be consistent with the spirit of the Gospel. The French accuse the Portuguese of teaching lax ethics and the Jesuits of having introduced a mercantile, scheming spirit. These latter take issue with the French over the right to preach the Gospel in the East Indies and the freedom to set up any establishment. They base themselves on a bull of Martin V in 1444, confirmed and extended by Popes Eugene IV, Nicholas V and Sixtus IV, which grants sovereign domain to the Portuguese crown over all the lands to be discovered as far as, and including, the Indies. They bolster their case with the 1494 papal brief of Alexander VI which divides the East and West Indies between the Spanish and the Portuguese, drawing a line from the north to the south pole, which would be one hundred *lieues* [550 kilometres] to the west and south of the islands called the Azores or Cape Verde. They infer from this that the kings of Spain and Portugal alone have the right to send missionaries to these parts of the world and to make ecclesiastic appointments. Whether they are justified or not, their conduct towards the French missionaries is no less reprehensible. Every day they lay hands on their best establishments, represent them as heretics to the local people and arouse the suspicion of the great against them. In vain the Supreme Pontiffs have sought to put an end to these abuses by issuing menacing bulls and, lastly, appointing French bishops. The Spanish and the Portuguese refuse to acknowledge their jurisdiction, which they see as having been usurped, not having been approved by the courts of Spain and Portugal. All of these disputes give rise to a scandalous fuss where not even charity is spared. The French missionaries, who are lacking in people, rightly fear being forced to give up this mission, their small numbers exposing them to renewed persecution, especially during the last four or five years when the Portuguese in Macao have been trading with Cochinchina. The freedom to preach the Gospel and perhaps the independence and ease of trade [in Cochinchina] attract a great many monks from Macao and the Manillas [Philippines], who spread out over the country like swallows. The Jesuits especially are well established there. By dint of their talents, they make their way in court and gain the goodwill of the great whom they know how to humour with discernment. Religion would benefit greatly were it always the motive which actuates them; but it is to be feared that their private squabbles and self-interest subsequently lower the good opinion which has been formed of them.

Several of these missionaries have distinguished themselves by their piety and ability. The French speak highly of Father de Sennemand, who died a godly

death after having preached the Gospel for fifty-five years. I have seen Cochinchinese shed tears in mentioning his name. The Jesuits are proud of having had Father Si[e]bert, a German missionary, able mathematician and man of wit. The king reigning today was very fond of him and had made him a mandarin of the first rank. This missionary was a shrewd courtier and knew how to make himself agreeable and necessary. To the talents he possessed he added that of appearing to have even more. His fellow missionaries acknowledge his ability, his good-heartedness and [his possessing] all of the virtues which make up an honest man, but they reproach him for not having had the spirit of his [clerical] estate. When he died he had great designs on Cochinchina, which he wanted to extricate from barbarism by introducing Europeans. The society [of Jesus] has all the more reason to miss him because it has so far been unable to replace him. Father Koffler, who succeeded him, does not have his talents and still less his reputation.[24] Chance made him the king's senior physician and ignorance brought him into fashion. I have seen this Jesuit on a gilded galley, dressed in a flowered black gauze gown, a flame-coloured shirt and pants, with an enormously big doctor's cap, spangled with imitation gems. Such a ridiculous appearance is, I believe, less a badge of ability and distinction than evidence of the wandering of the mind.

The churches in Cochinchina do not differ from pagodas in shape and outside appearance. Each missionary has his province divided into several villages, which they call *chrétiennetés* [christendoms], where from time to time he goes to say mass and administer the sacraments. In each church there is a catechist to instruct new converts and children. Only the litanies of the Virgin and the Saints and evening and morning prayers translated into Cochinchinese are recited. According to an old custom which was practised in the days of the persecutions, Christians sleep and eat in the churches, the men separated from the women.

The Gospel has not yet put an end to pagan ideas amongst these Christians, particularly their respect for the dead which borders on worship. Their funeral ceremonies and other religious practices are akin to those of the idol worshippers. They wrap their dead in shrouds of the most precious cloth and keep them at home for months on end while they eat, drink and make merry as the pagans do. However zealous the missionaries are, they will have trouble in correcting these evil customs, as well as their insincerity, slander, mendacity, licentious ways and

[24] Jean Koffler was the only missionary allowed to remain after the persecution of 1750. See Johannes Koffler, 'Description historique de la Cochinchine', *Revue Indochinoise*, Vols 15 and 16, Hanoi, 1911. See Christophus Theophilo de Murr, *Koffler, Johannes, Historica Cochinchinae descriptio in Epitome redacta ab Anselmo Eckart*, Nuremberg, 1803. The original, in German, was written by Johannes Koffler in 1766.

above all the propensity to steal, which seems to be the original sin of the Cochinchinese.

Idol Worship

The king, the mandarins and the learned are versed in the religion of Confucius, but less to make it the object of their devotion than to apply its understanding and ethics to the government of the state, the art of governing and the acts of the prince. That is why they call this book the Science of Kings. The scholarly or learned seem painstakingly to study this philosopher's ideas, which they always construe in a manner bewildering to the common people. Confucius ranks among the great men and heroes whom they worship. Idol worship is the same as in China. It is the religion of the court and the people, to which local prejudices have added many unique superstitions. Mountains, forests, rivers, the memory of ancestors, respect for the dead and especially spirits are subjects of worship. The most dull-witted Cochinchinese firmly believes that a guardian spirit presides over everything he does. To these general superstitions the common people add their own. There is a god for each man's fancy. Some worship a tree, others a stone, etc.; it would thus be difficult to determine what sort of idol worship predominates in Cochinchina.

The beauty and sumptuousness of the pagodas bear only a faint resemblance to those in China. There are gigantic, hideous-looking figures, out of proportion and not true to life. The bonzes or priests of these pagodas are ignorant and held in contempt by rich and poor alike. They are nevertheless consulted in matters of importance. They affect great poverty and live on charity alone.

When the king moves from one palace to another several shots are fired opposite the one he is to occupy in order to cast out the evil spirits. This prince offers sacrifices at certain times of the year; these are always preceded by elephant and tiger fights. For important feasts the king appears in public, brandishing his sword in the air like a ruffian against the ethereal spirits.

The renewing of the year[25] is another ceremonious occasion. It is Cochinchina's [equivalent of] carnival. While the January moon lasts, shops are shut and work interrupted, and the court and town are given over to debauchery. The most ceremonial of all these feasts is the one celebrated every year in Huay to commemorate the first Cou-ha's crossing over the river and the victory over the Tongkinese. Here is what I learned about it.

All of the king's galleys, sixty or eighty in number, line either side of the river. One side flies the flag of Tongking, which is red, and the other the Cochinchinese colours, which are of the same colour with a green orb in the middle. At the

[25] *Tết* or lunar new year.

sound of the guns the king, plainly dressed, leaves his palace and goes to the bank of the river where there is a boat resembling the one which carried the first Cou-ha across. The king offers five *quan* to the boatman, who takes him in his boat and pushes off to cross to the other side of the river. Then the Tongking galleys, rowing and shouting, rush the boat. Next the Cochinchinese galleys sweep down upon the Tongking ones. Out of these various manoeuvres a mock battle takes shape which is entertaining and lasts several hours. At last the Tongking galleys are beaten and take flight, the Cochinchinese ones pursue them and the pageant ends. The rest of the day is spent in merrymaking and feasting.

Chinese Trade with Cochinchina

The Chinese have for a long time traded with Cochinchina, which they look upon as a province which was once part of their empire and over which they claim to have rights. Their claims have at various times brought about upheavals, whose little success has drawn upon them the contempt of the Cochinchinese. The last one, which occurred four or five years ago,[26] would have been decided in their favour had it been directed by capable and competent people. Despite the hatred which is felt for them, and the difficulties placed in the way of their business, their numbers are growing considerably. There are many of them in the interior of the country and as far as Cambodia, Champa and Laos. Through their industry and their natural bent for business, they turn to their account the ignorance of the Cochinchinese, who are primitive and unable to reap the benefits which exist in their country. The Chinese consequently carry out the sounder part of the trade of the whole kingdom, and know the place better than the Cochinchinese do. The proximity of China puts them within the [necessary] reach to bring in goods suited to the country in a timely fashion [and] arrange their sale according to circumstances and the ups and downs of trade in order to make their return cargoes more lucrative. They can be said to have a gift for discerning Cochinchinese taste, appropriating their useful attainments and making trifles appear as precious and indispensable in their eyes. It is with such precautions that four or five years ago they introduced tutenag into Cochinchina. This metal, familiar and base in China, today makes up the bulk of their trade.[27] The huge profit they make on this substance has led them to abandon or suspend [trade in] all other articles. More will be said on the subject of tutenag below. The goods which they bring to Cochinchina are, viz.:

[26] In 1747 a Chinese merchant attempted to take over the provincial government of what is now Biên Hòa.

[27] Tutenag, that is to say zinc, was in Chinese called 'poor', 'inferior', 'mean' or 'white' lead, in opposition to lead itself ('black lead').

Tutenag, white copper[28] and copper, calin [tin] which they buy from the Dutch, paper, tea of the poorest qualities, a few small damasks, lead, [and] a great deal of crude blue porcelain.

That [type of porcelain] with flowers and patterns is not prized. The blue and white must look as if pounded and moulded together, with the gradations [in colour] appearing to be the result of chance and not artistry.

The return cargoes are:

Gold, raw silk, eaglewood, raw ivory, white and candy sugar, pepper, areca nut, [and] some local timber for furniture.

Chinese junks ordinarily arrive in Cochinchina in January and February; the trading season lasts until September. These junks have agents throughout the trading provinces of the kingdom who purchase goods and hold them ready for their arrival.

Tutenag

The Chinese, in bringing tutenag to Cochinchina, were meaning to conduct only a trial business, and to learn if it were possible to turn to good account a metal which is held in contempt [in China] and which has in itself little intrinsic value. They brought some for the first time in 1745. The middling price they put on it pandered to the miserliness of the king reigning today. Forced for minting his currency to buy copper from the Chinese at a high price, and not always having as much as he wanted because it is forbidden to take this substance out of China, he thought he had a great deal to gain in having cash made from tutenag. From this time onwards the Chinese have taken a great deal and have bought the old cash, which were made of copper, at a profit [in order] to take them back [to China] where they are legal tender.

The king buys tutenag at 14 *quan* a *pique* [*pikul*, or 60 kilograms] of 120 *catis* [*kati*, or 0.6 kilograms],[29] and in reducing it to coins he gets 48, 49 and often 50 *quan* from it, which represents a huge profit.

The *quan* is made of up 10 *mas* [*mạch*] and the *mạch* of 60 cash. The *mạch* is usually reckoned at 8 *sous*. So the *quan* is worth 4 *livres*[30] and hardly varies except [in respect of] the exchange rate of gold and silver. This large amount of tutenag has brought about upheavals in trade of which the king has taken advantage to buy up all the gold in his kingdom. The Chinese for their part have

[28] White copper: an alloy of copper, zinc and nickel sometimes also containing traces of arsenic.
[29] 100 *kati* to the *pikul* is the usual conversion. But *pikul* of 120 or 150 *kati* also seem to have been used, particularly for bulkier or heavier merchandise. Manguin (1984:82, 152) mentions a *pikul* of 150 Chinese *kati* used for weighing sugar.
[30] i.e. one *quan* equals 10 *mạch* x (8 sous/1 *mạch*) x (1 livre/20 sous) = 4 livres, i.e. 20 grams of silver.

made as much out of it as they could, and private individuals have also bought tutenag which they have made into counterfeit cash which they pass off in business. Gold, which before the use of tutenag was worth 120, 125 and 130 *quan* a *neu* [*nên*] or bar, has suddenly reached 230 and 235 *quan*. All other goods have increased proportionately. Such was the situation in Cochinchina when we arrived.

Notwithstanding a change so injurious to the business which the Company was planning to carry on, it could hope that the sale of its silver [piastres] and its goods, even without [making] a profit, would at least procure it profitable return cargoes. It could rely on that all the more because silver is very scarce in Cochinchina. With these plans in mind the Company proposed to the king to exchange its piastres for cash. It was demonstrated to him that in making a profit of 300 per cent on tutenag, and buying silver for the price of this common coinage, he would have the silver for next to nothing. The best measures undertaken and the most pressing entreaties notwithstanding, it was not possible to induce him to take [the silver]. Following his lead, private individuals did not want any or else offered only a price well below its intrinsic value. We were reduced to asking for the piastres to be marked with the stamp of the king and be accepted as legal tender in the kingdom, which was granted. Consequently an edict was obtained ordering all the king's subjects to accept in their dealings the square piastre at the rate of one *quan* 2 *mạch* 48 cash, and the round piastre at that of one *quan* 3 *mạch* [i.e. about 20.5 grams of minted silver].

But the mandarins secretly opposed this edict's being issued. As they are all counterfeiters they would have forfeited a huge profit and would not have enjoyed the same ease in forging piastres as in counterfeiting cash. They aroused suspicions in the king's mind, which became publicly known, and by an astonishing quirk the money fell into a state of disrepute which can have no precedent but in Cochinchina. There was no longer any question of making use of the money without losing a great deal [in the process].

The Company still had a string to its bow in the novelty and assortment of its remaining goods. Some through their sumptuousness could indulge the ostentation of the great, and the others through their middling worth seemed suited to the limited means of the common people. All of these goods were admired, but nobody bought any. The Company was scarcely able to sell three hundred *quan* worth. The king and the mandarins stole the finest ones or bought them and did not [subsequently] pay for them. Being thus unable to convert the silver and the goods into the funds required for making purchases, we were forced to abandon a venture destroyed by the very means which ought to have made it succeed, and by circumstances and annoyances which all [possible] human foresight cannot prevent. To all these difficulties were added countless

individual intrigues, involving the Portuguese Jesuits as well as the other missionaries, which are merely incidental to the main matters and not worth relating.

The upheavals which occur in Cochinchina, be they in business or in the very composition of the state, can only be attributed to poor government, the weaknesses of the laws, ignorance, and the miserliness of the king. To accumulate his wealth this prince has so often used means profitable in appearance but as a matter of fact ruinous for his subjects that the people no longer trust him. Victims of the tyranny and greed of the great, they are forever wary of new traps and look upon whatever comes from the king as suspicious and dangerous. They are convinced that the prince does not love his subjects, that he is unjust, callous and capable of resorting to the most shameful devices to get rich. I will relate a few convincing instances. There is a time of the year when the king pays his soldiers with bars[31] bearing his stamp. These bars are worth sixteen *quan* on the market, but he forces them to take them at the rate of twenty *quan*, and when these same bars come into his coffers, he accepts them at only twelve or at the very most fourteen *quan*. It is through experiences such as these that private individuals have refused to buy the Company's piastres. Whatever gain there was in it for them, they have been right to fear that for the payment of tributes and public taxes, the king would not accept them at the current price; and perhaps that was his intention. Through a policy so detrimental to the state, the king allows private individuals to buy tutenag, but forbids them to melt it down into cash. Such a peculiar disparity has its source in the prince's miserliness, ingenious in finding unfair pretexts to have the opportunity to despoil the people. The same holds true for everything that may indulge his fancy and enjoyment. If he learns that a private individual has something rare and curious, he sends soldiers who plunder him and lay hands on everything. The common people thus live in great obscurity. They take pains to look poorer than they are. Everyone buries his money and most prized possessions to avoid being harassed by the great, who abuse the king's authority to grow rich.

Trade is restricted and carried out clandestinely. Expensive commodities like gold, eaglewood, raw ivory and silk are not sold publicly. To obtain any, one has to scheme and carry on dealings in secret, curry favour with the mandarins and chiefs, who have to be bribed, or otherwise one is a target for plunder or ruinous annoyances.

[31] Given their value in *quan*, these were in all likelihood silver bars or ingots, roughly comparable to that of the silver bars into which the Company's silver piastres were to be melted. 15 or 16 piastres were to be melted down into bars of 10 *tael*, worth twenty *quan* ('Journal', pp. 416, 429).

Given the nature of the government of Cochinchina it will not come as a surprise that the Company has encountered insurmountable difficulties in its designs to set up an establishment and a trade. Both require procedures and arrangements which cannot take place among people who are not amenable to them. [The Company] requires privileges and immunities which will make trade free and easy for it, which will shelter it from harassment by the great, which will set it apart from the Chinese and the Portuguese, and which will guarantee it sure and profitable return cargoes. This is [precisely] what cannot be expected in Cochinchina. Everything appears to run counter to it: poor government, the laws, barbarism and the national character. Besides, the articles of trade indicated to the Company, although real and available, are not equally plentiful. Gold which is essential is very scarce, or rather no more to be found. I even believe it would be difficult, if one excepts sugar and pepper, to make up a cargo supplied with the other goods. It is not that the country is incapable of producing a great deal more of them, but that to make better use of it, the ignorance and crudeness of the Cochinchinese would have to be replaced with the talents and intelligence which they are lacking.

Supposing the Company wants to start with tutenag, it must beware of the disadvantages linked to this substance, the great quantity of which is beginning to make it difficult to dispose of. The king has more than he can have melted down in ten years, and private individuals have made so many counterfeit cash that it is almost customary to lose a third or a half on payments.

A company which in future wants to set up business in Cochinchina and make solid arrangements for carrying on profitable trade must present itself with the means capable of making itself feared and respected. It will find them in the situation of the country in general and especially the Bay of Turon [Đà Nẵng] where a line of defences can be easily raised. The smallest fort would lay down the law by cutting off communication between one province and another and would be met with only weak resistance from the inhabitants, timid and less seasoned [fighters] than the Malays. This undertaking requires an accurate knowledge of the country. But the Company appears to have given this up since it has left no-one there to inform it of the circumstances contrary or favourable to any stand it would have deemed advisable to adopt. It could have set up links by means of the Chinese junks returning from Cochinchina to China. By leaving an intelligent man there who would have applied himself to delving more deeply into the items of trade, to acquiring local knowledge by travelling the length and breadth of the interior of the country, and especially to learning the language, [the Company] would have been in a position to make a sound judgement and leave nothing to chance. Nevertheless I am inclined to believe that it has acted well, since it has not deemed this advisable.

Gold

Cochinchina appears to be the true country of gold. In the mountains are all the signs which prove its abundance. A native ore can be seen on the surface of the earth, and in heavy rains the torrents which come streaming down from the mountains abound with grains of gold dust. Superstition prevents them from prospecting in these mountains, which are objects of worship. Besides they are poor miners and unacquainted with the works required and useful for making the most out of a mine. Several times they have been buried alive for lack of knowledge about how to place props to hold up the earth, and for lack of running the water off. These frequent accidents have discouraged them. They make do with opening a trench and running off the water into screens which are placed there to collect the gold. Such limited works cannot produce very much. Yet [the gold] would be more prevalent if these works were multiplied in the profitable places. But the tyranny and miserliness of the king swallow up everything. Although searching for gold is allowed upon payment of a tax to the king, no-one undertakes it, because the mandarins and officers entrusted with supervising it plunder and ruin the workers.

The richest mine is in the province of Fououserac [Phú Âu (Sách), near Huế] and belongs to the king. I have heard that it is beginning to be mined out. The gold that is extracted from it is the finest and purest there is in the world.

Silk

The silk of Cochinchina is far superior to that of China where quality and fineness are concerned. The finest comes from the province of Quanhia [Quảng Ngãi, also pronounced Quảng Nghĩa]. The Chinese take a great deal and make a profit of 10 or 15 per cent on it.

The Cochinchinese are beginning to be aware of the usefulness of silk which they have long disregarded. But out of either ignorance or the little nous they have for mechanical arts, they have not yet succeeded in sorting the various kinds in order to make up special qualities. This is what makes their fabrics defective.

The price of silk varies according to years of greater or lesser plenty. The current price in the season is 40 cash a *tall* [*tael* or 37.8 grams], which amounts to 4 l. [*livres*] 16 s. [*sous*] a *kati*.[32]

[32] i.e. one gram of silver in the Cochinchinese currency buys 28 grams of silk, while one gram of silver in the French currency buys only 25 grams of silk.

Eaglewood

Calembac or the finest grade of eaglewood belongs to the king who is the only person to deal in it. It is worth up to sixty and eighty *quan* a *kati*, and it is very difficult to obtain any. The second[-best] quality is easier to come by. The other inferior ones are commonplace.

One needs to be a connoisseur to buy this commodity, because they know how to make imitation [eaglewood] by blackening [other wood] and coating it with an unrelated resin to make it appear of superior quality. The eaglewood of Cochinchina and particularly that of Laos and Champa has much more fragrance than that of Siam, the [Melaka] Straits and the other places where the Dutch obtain it.[33] Monsieur Friel, when putting in at Malac [Melaka] on his return from Cochinchina in 1744, made a profit of 50 or 60 per cent on that which he brought.[34]

[33] Poivre writes in his 'Journal', pp. 432-33:
'I bought some eaglewood of the third sort which is usually worth eighteen to twenty *quan* a *pic*. It is an item of merchandise on which one is very easily cheated. The Cochinchinese adroitly mix in with this wood counterfeit pieces painted on the outside and perfumed in the smoke of the real one, so that one must be quite a connoisseur not to be caught unawares.

'One should know that there are three sorts of eaglewood. The first is called *Khi nam* [*Kỳ nam*], the heart of the aloe tree which is so resinous that a fingernail can be inserted into it as into wax. It is very dear and the king has the sole right to sell this item of merchandise: it is calembac wood.

'The second sort is called *tlam hieong* [*trầm hương*], in French calembac. It appears almost as resinous as the other, but it has more wood and consequently is lighter and harder. However when it is thrown into water, it does not float on the surface and this is the surest sign for recognizing it. It is brown in colour with many small black spots owing to the resin which gives this sweet and pleasant odour which makes it sought after by Orientals for disinfecting their houses and making up their perfumes. This second sort is worth from seven *mạch*, to one *quan*, up to one and a half *quan* a *livre*. There is considerable profit in taking it to Suratte, Gedda, Moka, Bassora, etc.

'The third sort is eaglewood proper. The country people call it *thie hieong* [*tiến hương* (栈香)]. It is whiter, lighter, less resinous than the other two sorts. It sells for thirty to forty *quan* a *pic* depending on the year. The three sorts are the same tree more or less ripe and more or less resinous.

'To these three types one could add four others which the country people call *sin hieong* [*xanh hương* (青桂香)], that is, green eaglewood; it is sold for eighteen *quan* a *pic*; *Lao hieong* [? *hương*], twelve *quan*; *nhil hieong* [*nhất? hương* (好頂)], ten; *nhi hieong* [*nhị? hương* (常頂)], three *quan*. These [four] types are a white wood with almost no black vein. They are from the same tree as a matter of fact, but without resin and consequently without perfume or value. Cochinchinese merchants selling eaglewood never fail to slip in with the third sort [eaglewood proper] big logs of these last [kinds] which they know how to colour to make them look like they were of the second sort. One must reject them, [as] otherwise one would strike a very poor bargain, because the logs are very heavy.'

[34] The Irishman Jacques O'Friell headed a factory in Canton, where he met Poivre. He went to Cochinchina in 1743 on his way to India, where he served French interests, marrying into the family of Dupleix, head of the French establishment there.

Pepper

Pepper is very plentiful. It is fine and of good quality. A great deal is snapped up by the Chinese junks. That is what sent [the price] up in 1749 as high as fifteen and sixteen *quan* for a *pic* [*pikul*] of 120 *kati*.[35]

Raw Ivory

Elephant hunting is forbidden. The king alone can have them and all the tusks belong to him by right. It is only in secret and with a great deal of precaution that a few are bought; this commodity thus has no set, current price.

Cotton

The mandarins and the well-to-do wear silk which they prefer to cotton. Ordinary people make a calico from it, for their personal use, which is coarse and loosely woven. Cotton would be more plentiful and would become an important article of trade if it were not for the ignorance of the inhabitants who pay no heed to cultivating it. Clean, it is worth one *mas* [*mạch*] or eight s. [*sous*] a *kati*.

Iron

The iron [here] looks brittle, stiff, short, and full of flaws.[36] It is difficult to forge. The Cochinchinese do not know how to cast it into marketable bars. They prefer copper, even though [it is] dearer and not found in their country, for making items and implements for their own use.

Building Timber

Cochinchina is full of mountains abounding with building timber and other sorts [of wood] suitable for making furniture, but it is impossible to transport [this timber] because of the problem [posed by] roads which are impassable. The finest [timber] comes from Donnaye [Đồng Nai], a province of Cambodia.[37] It is a flat country intersected by rivers which disappear into the sea, which makes transporting these timbers easy and convenient. It is common to see planking eighty and ninety *pieds* [around 25 metres] in length of a wood as fine and perfect as oak. Every year many sampans set off, tugging sizable floats [of timber].

[35] i.e. around 300 grams of minted silver per *pikul* of 60 kilograms, as compared with an early seventeenth-century value of around 130 grams of minted silver per *pikul* (see 'Trials of a foreign merchant').
[36] *Aigre, sec, cassant et rempli de pailles*; all of these terms describe metal which breaks easily and is difficult to work.
[37] Formerly a province of Cambodia, but no longer the case in Poivre's day.

These timbers are very cheap. It is only labour and distance which increase their price.

Sugar

Sugar is the most plentiful item of trade actually available. It is white and of a good grain. Crystal sugar[38] or candy is fine[ly grained], transparent [translucent] and of good quality. The Chinese buy a great deal which they pulverize and on which they earn 30 or 40 per cent in their country.

The finest is worth during the season, as follows:

Top grade white sugar 4 *quan* or 16 l. [*livres*] a large *pikul* [i.e. 53 grams of minted silver per *pikul* of 60 kilograms];

Top grade candy sugar 5 *quan* or 20 l. [*livres*] id. [i.e. 67 grams of minted silver per *pikul* of 60 kilograms];

Other inferior kinds [are priced] proportionately.

Indigo

The Cochinchinese do not know how to make it into loaves. It is liquid and is not easily conserved. This stems from their not knowing how to prepare it. It does not seem of good quality judging by the cloths dyed in this colour. It is pale and washes out easily.

Dyes

The most common one is a seed that is sown at random everywhere and which grows readily. It puts out a stalk at the end of which is a flower which is dried and which, when steeped, is a scarlet dye. Local people simply make a lye from it in which they soak their fabrics, which are usually coloured rose rather than scarlet. This dye is not fast and turns a pale violet if it is rinsed.

The Chinese know how to prepare it. They take a lot to China which they make up into different qualities, in flame-colour, cerise and rose, which they sell back to the Cochinchinese at a profit of 400 or 500 per cent. This is what makes the fabrics dyed in these hues much dearer than the others.

There are a lot of timbers, barks, roots and leaves from which different dyes are made, but their preparation is inadequate.

[38] *Sucre en pierres* — possibly large-grained crystal sugar. *Sucre en pains* would designate loaf sugar.

Rattan

It is not very nice and is hard to fashion. There is some of another sort, much thicker and full of knots, which the Cochinchinese use to make stays, cables and moorings, and to fasten their boats.

The Trading Season

The geography of Cochinchina is not convenient for travel. It is full of steeply sloping mountains covered with woods and cut through by chasms which cut off the roads. They become completely impassable from the beginning of October until the end of January. This is the season of rains, hurricanes and floods which make river navigation arduous and dangerous. The end of this season is the beginning of fine weather and trade. At that time the Cochinchinese come down from the mountains bringing choice goods like silks, raw silk and eaglewood, in girdles or rattan baskets tied to both ends of a flexible and pliant bamboo cane which they put over their shoulders and the weight of which they distribute evenly to make the load easier to carry. The villages and aldeas located along the coast or within reach of rivers convey the bulky goods such as rice, sugar, pepper, iron, etc., by water.

The city of Faifo [Hội An] in the province of Thiam[39] is the entrepot shared by all these goods. It is on the banks of a large river which flows into the sea two *lieues* [11 kilometres] away. The Chinese junks and local boats berth easily and enjoy the convenience of loading and unloading alongside the quay. This city is the residence of the Chinese agents and all the merchants of the kingdom who do business there. At that time all sorts of goods from China for use by the Cochinchinese are to be found, and in addition the pick of the choice goods peculiar to the country. There is no comparison between the trading season and the other seasons of the year. As soon as it is finished, the Chinese junks leave and the merchants go back home. The goods which remain are usually rejects and of the lowest quality. This season is followed by the payment of tributes [and] military duties, which occupy the people and the workers, whose labour can no longer be obtained at any price whatsoever.

The Company experienced [the off-season] through the difficulties it had in finding a few pieces of silk fabric of the lowest qualities and three or four hundred *pikul* of low-grade sugar. These it bought for a much dearer price than the top qualities are worth during the season.

[39] Chiêm, i.e. Cham. This former Cham centre had long been under Nguyễn control, but place names such as Đai Chiêm and Chàm Dinh (Map 8) persisted into Nguyễn times.

Faifo is not conveniently situated for setting up a factory. It would cost the Company too much to convey its merchandise down river or up river from this town to the Bay of Turon which is four or five *lieues* [20 to 25 kilometres] distant. It seems [the factory] would be better placed at the headland of the Turon River [Sông Hàn], where the flat land looks suitable for building large, convenient warehouses. All necessary relief would be within range, and the boats from the ships [could be used] for transporting merchandise, which would save considerable expense. But the Company can make these arrangements only by using means capable of determining the items of trade in its interest.

Portuguese Trade in Cochinchina

The Portuguese owe to Father Siebert, a Jesuit, the freedom they have had for five years to trade in Cochinchina. Every year they send a five- or six-hundred-tonne ship with a lascar crew on board, under the name of a wealthy individual from Macao, called Louis Coellio [Coelho].[40] But the Jesuits are suspected of being the ones who really commission it and of using the conveyance of provisions to the missionaries as a pretext for carrying on a profitable trade. In Faifo they have a factor from their nation who speaks the local language well and who seems quite shrewd. They bring tutenag, tea, porcelain and other goods from China for use by the Cochinchinese. The main return cargo consists of sugar, which they send to India, [and] eaglewood and raw silk which they sell to the Dutch. The Portuguese have presented themselves poorly in Cochinchina. They have created a bad impression of Europeans, by doing business like the Chinese and by submitting to the local customs which make them slaves to the great. Their business is obstructed, uncertain and often interrupted by annoyances which force them to take steps which are servile and dishonourable. This nation is no longer able to oppose the establishment which a Company would wish to set up in Cochinchina. Macao is dying and is sustained only by its convents, still wealthy, which have made it into a sort of republic which no longer recognizes the dominion of Portugal.

The English

Chance brought an Englishman to Cochinchina who appeared to take great pains to learn the condition of the country, inquire deeply into the articles of trade, and gain all the knowledge useful for doing business on his own or setting up the English Company there.

[40] Owner of the *Saint-Louis* and said to be the richest ship owner in Macao ('Journal', pp. 369-70).

Mr Douff (the name of this Englishman),[41] crossing from Canton to Batavia in a Chinese junk at the end of 1747, was caught in a squall between the Paracel [Islands] and Cochinchina which forced him to put into harbour. The king summoned this European and asked him if he were not a physician. He happened to be a physician and cured the prince of a very dangerous fistula [ulcer]. This cure brought him great repute and credit at court. He took advantage of it to have some goods which had been stolen from him by the mandarins restored to him, and was granted leave to travel up and down the coast of the kingdom. He was in Cambodia where he travelled up and down, made drawings [or maps] of the coves and of the bays which seemed to him suitable for going ashore, and returned to the court. He continued to cultivate the goodwill of the king, who made him a mandarin of the first rank. This prince offered him a galley which was maintained, soldiers, servants and four thousand *quan* a year to be his physician. Mr Douff, [who] fancied he saw a surer opportunity in returning to Macao to commission a ship, thanked the king, who made him promise on leaving to come back the following year.

What makes one think that this Englishman did not intend to come to Cochinchina and that he was not sent there by the Company of England is that he left some goods there for the use of the Dutch in Batavia, whose disposal had still not been possible by the time we left Cochinchina.

The Dutch

There is in Cochinchina a well-remembered tradition which seems to prove that the Dutch have been known there for a long while. According to this tradition, about sixty years ago four Dutch ships dropped anchor in the mouth of the Faifo River [Sông Thu Bồn]; they made an incursion, burned several villages and moved forward into the country; the king sent his galleys which sank one of these ships and forced the others to retreat after having captured and killed a great many people.[42] The monuments of this victory are a few iron cannon two- and four-pounders which I saw, which are not a Dutch weapon, and which have no sign indicating to which nation they belonged. [The tradition further states that] since this time the Cochinchinese call Europeans 'hollands', a mere abbreviation which signifies foreigners. But this story sounds very much like a fable. The galleys of Cochinchina (if they were built in times past as they are nowadays) could at the very most have carried only a four-pounder bow gun, and in whatever great

[41] Duff, a Scot (Malleret, *Pierre Poivre*, Paris, 1974, p. 159).
[42] In 1643 a Dutch fleet of three large warships was sent against Cochinchina to force the release of some Dutch hostages. A fleet of some fifty Vietnamese galleys succeeded in blowing up the Dutch flagship with the loss of all on board, and damaging the other two ships.

number one imagines them, they were not of a size adequate to do battle with four ships fitted out for an expedition of this nature. It is more reasonable to believe that some ship from this nation was lost on the coast of Cochinchina; that the inhabitants carried off the cannon, and slaughtered or took as slaves those who survived the shipwreck. As for the word 'hollan', which means foreigner, it is etymological to the language.[43] In whatever manner, this country is well known and detested. Perhaps it is by the venture it attempted in China that it reached Cochinchina. The Portuguese and the missionaries seem to take pains to keep alive Cochinchinese hatred towards the Dutch, and furthermore to instil it in them towards all the nations of Europe.

Cambodia, Champa, Great and Lesser Lao or Laos

These kingdoms are tributaries of the king of Cochinchina. Cambodia is better known to the Cochinchinese than the others through the trade they carry out in Dounaye [Đồng Nai] which is a province of it. Champa is very small and not so well known. Great and lesser Laos are [located] behind Cochinchina from which they are separated by a long chain of precipitous mountains. The law which forbids the Cochinchinese to leave the kingdom, their laziness and their natural ignorance rob them of the benefits which they would reap in taking pains to become familiar with the interior and the articles of trade of these various countries.

The Cochinchinese Language

This language has no rules. There is neither declension nor conjugation. Words are not linked together. It suffices to place them indifferently one after the other to form sentences. Its pronunciation is muted and unnatural, which makes it difficult to learn. It is even less easy to write it through the extraordinary shape of the characters. The style is no richer or more elegant than the language. It is inflated, florid and full of hyperbole, like the Orientals [themselves].

[43] *Hoa Lang*, derived from 'Holland', means a westerner in Vietnamese.

8. MISCELLANEOUS NGUYỄN RECORDS SEIZED IN 1775-6

PHỦ BIÊN TẠP LỤC [MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS OF PACIFICATION IN THE BORDER AREA]

By Lê Quý Đôn

Excerpts translated by Li Tana

Lê Quý Đôn (1726-1784) was born in Diên Hà village, Diên Hà county, Sơn Nam Hạ Trấn (today's Phú Hiệu village, Diên Hà county, Thái Bình province). In 1774, when the Nguyễn ruler was fighting the army of the Tây Sơn, the Trịnh took over Thuận Hóa. At the end of 1775, the Trịnh ruler (Trịnh Sâm) set up a Trấn Phủ Nha Môn *(an office both as a garrison and mediator) in Phú Xuân (Huế), with Bùi Thế Đạt as the officer in charge. In February 1776, Lê Quý Đôn was appointed as Bùi's assistant officer (*hiệp trấn phủ*). He was called back to Thăng Long six months later.* ***Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*** *(Miscellaneous Records of Pacification in the Border Area) was written during the six months when Lê Quý Đôn was in Phú Xuân.*

Lê Quý Đôn never published the book but in 1815 an officer called Dương Mẫn, who operated in Sơn Tây (today's Hà Sơn Bình province), saw it and ordered it to be copied. ***Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*** *apparently remained in circulation only in the north until the Nguyễn emperor Minh Mạng (r. 1819-1840) ordered the retrieval of earlier works so as to compile an official Nguyễn history. Phan Huy Chú then listed and quoted the book in 1820 when he compiled* ***Lịch Triệu Hiến Chương Loại Chí*** *(Reference Book of the Institutions of Successive Dynasties). During the reign of Tự Đức (1847-1883) two copies were reportedly kept in the imperial library, one with a preface and genealogy and the other without. These copies appear to have been the sources for all subsequent copies, including those made by the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient in Hanoi at the beginning of the twentieth century.*

Because Phú Xuân was taken by the Trịnh very rapidly, a great amount of Nguyễn files and documents was seized by the Trịnh. ***Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*** *used many of them, which makes the book extremely valuable. It has six volumes:*

1. The establishment of the protectorates of Thuận Hóa and Quảng Nam, their prefectures, counties and villages;

2. The mountains, towns, fortresses, roads, ferries and toll-posts of Thuận Hóa and Quảng Nam;

3. The quantities of land and land tax, taxpayers and officials of the prefectures and counties (as well as their salaries) in Thuận Hóa and Quảng Nam;

4. The taxes on trade, ferries, ports, gold, salt and other local products. The coinage;

5. The literati and their poems; four letters of the Nguyễn ruler written to Chinese officials and four letters to the king of Siam;

6. The local products, handicraft industry, and slaves in Đồng Nai (the eastern part of south Vietnam).

For present purposes, volumes 3, 4 and 6 are of most importance. Some key extracts from volumes 1 and 2 are also translated here.

The first modern edition of ***Phủ Biên Tạp Lục****, translated into Vietnamese and edited by Đào Duy Anh (Press of Sciences, Hanoi, 1964), was compiled from comparing four earlier editions. The present translation follows a later edition, edited by Lê Xuân Giáo (Phủ Quốc Vụ-Khanh Đặc-Trách Văn Hóa, Saigon, 1973), because it includes the Chinese original as well as the Vietnamese translation. However, alternative readings in the Hanoi edition are noted when they appear to be relevant.*

The Surrender of Thuận Hóa to the Trịnh (Vol. 1, pp. 46b-47b)

[When the Trịnh army went to Quảng Bình] the *trấn thủ* [garrison chiefs] of Lưu Đồn [Võ Xã] and Quảng Bình were too old to fight. Besides, their soldiers had been sent to Quảng Nam, and the people left could hardly be called an army, so they surrendered to the Trịnh army. The Trịnh army went on along Lũy Trường Dục,[1] arrived at Trấm Cung, and obtained 1,400,000 *bát* [700 kilolitres] of rice.

When the Trịnh army rested at Hồ Xá village, Minh Linh county, the garrison chief by the name of Bùi sent somebody to give certain instructions to the Nguyễn ruler [Nguyễn Phúc Thuần, 1765-1777]. After consulting with each other, the people in the Nguyễn family such as Nguyễn Hương decided to surrender

[1] 'Trường Dục rampart', possibly a name for the main wall defending the Nguyễn northern border against the Trịnh.

Trương Phúc Loan[2] to the Trịnh to pacify the situation. The people in Thuận Hóa were excited, they destroyed Trương Phúc Loan's home and confiscated his property, and killed his brother. The Nguyễn ruler asked one of his officials whose name was Lê Công Bình to send Trương Phúc Loan to the Trịnh by sea, and to ask the Trịnh to accept the map of the south.[3] In addition the Nguyễn ruler's official also brought 800 *lạng* [30 kilograms] of gold with him as tribute to the Trịnh; 200 *lạng* of it was sent to the garrison chief as tribute. However, no reply was given.

According to an army official [*cai đội*] whose name was Tô Nhuận, when the army of the north came, the army of the Nguyễn thought they could not be regular troops of the Trịnh since they were not numerous, with the generals only dressed in black cotton gowns, and the soldiers dressed very shabbily. Because the people in the south were accustomed to living in a lavish style, they judged their enemies by their clothes.

Description of the Cham Country (Vol. 2, pp. 85b-87b)

The Nguyễn ruler took over the land of the Cham, when he saw that the descendants of the king of Champa were weak. He divided the land into prefectures and counties, renamed the kingdom 'Thuận Thành Trấn',[4] and conferred on Chinh-thon-ba-hu the title Marquis Trung [*trung* means loyal].

In August of that year, the Nguyễn ruler declared Marquis Trung to be king of Thuận Thành Trấn, with one of his subjects as *cai cơ*,[5] and four sons of the king whose names were Mon-lay-phu, Xac-lay-phu, Tao-thuyet-tuc and Xac-thuyet-phu as *cai đội* [army officers]. The Nguyễn ruler then sent one official to be the *cai án*, in charge of the law in Thuận Thành Trấn.

According to the record of 1769, the gifts that Thuận Thành Trấn made to the Nguyễn were as follows: two male elephants (one was delivered at Bình Khang Dinh,[6] and the other was replaced by 150 *quan* in money); 20 oxen (60 *quan* of money could be paid instead of one ox); six elephants' tusks; ten rhinoceros horns; 50 *cân* [30 kilograms] of yellow wax; 500 white cotton scarves; 200 skins

[2]Trương Phúc Loan had been the chief minister and force behind the throne during the reigns of Nguyễn Phúc Thuần and his predecessor, Nguyễn Phúc Khoát. The capture of Trương Phúc Loan, remembered in history as a rapacious tyrant, was ostensibly a main motive behind the Trịnh attack on the Nguyễn.
[3]Handing over the map of the country was presumably an act of great symbolic significance, equivalent to the Nguyễn ruler accepting the status of vassal to the emperor of the north.
[4]Thuận means 'obey'. 'Thuận Thành Trấn' can be translated as 'a strategic post which is obedient to the court'. This happened in March 1693.
[5]Not identified.
[6]The military division (*dinh*) of Bình Khang.

of fish; 400 buckets of oil; 500 *lá buông*;[7] 200 *bát* [100 litres] of black rice;[8] one ship as long as 7 *tam* [22.4 metres].

In listing the gifts the king of Thuận Thành Trấn had to begin with: 'The subject of Thuận Thành Trấn, Chinh-thon-ba-hu, falls on his knees to present the gifts.'

The following concerns the King of Water and the King of Fire who lived in Nam Bàn region.[9]

This country had about 50 villages. There is a very high mountain called Ba Nam, like a fortress for the area. The King of Water was to the east of the mountain, and the King of Fire to the west. Each of them had several hundred people who lived in huts, cultivating in the slash-and-burn style. They planted their rice in January [lunar year] and harvested in May. They did not bring the rice home, instead they built a circular structure in the field to hold the rice.

Those people did not know the calendar; as soon as the people built the circular structure the king began to collect taxes. He rode on the elephant's back, followed by about ten subjects. Whenever they arrived at one village, they struck the gong three times. Then the people came out to build a hut for the king to live in, because according to the custom there, if the king entered a common person's house he might bring misfortune to the family. The tax was not fixed and people could pay whatever they liked: a copper pot, a piece of white cotton cloth, a piece of sugarcane, or a bunch of bananas. Then the king went on to the other villages.

Both the kings were black and ugly, but all of their wives and concubines were beautiful and dressed in colourful Cham dresses.

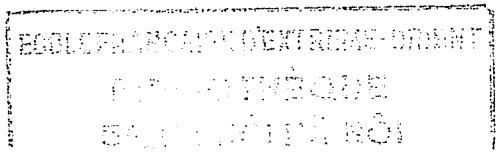
A Visit to the Mekong Delta (Vol. 2, pp. 90a-90b)

A trader named Đồng Trâm, who came from Chính Hòa village in Nam Bố Chính, described his trip to the Gia Định [Saigon] area as follows.

He had gone to the Gia Định area more than ten times. Usually he went there in September or October [lunar year], and left in April or May. Gia Định could be reached within ten days and nights by sailing with the help of the wind.

He said that every time he had to pass through the Nhật Lệ seaport to see the official of the garrison, and then through the Eo seaport to see the transportation official to get a certification, and then out to sea. On the way to the Gia Định area a place with some residents, called Vũng Tàu, would be reached first. Here you could ask people which places had good harvests. From here, going to the right

[7]A kind of leaf used for weaving conical hats.
[8]A type of sticky rice.
[9]In 1471 Lê Thánh Tôn divided Champa into three regions: Nam Bàn, Hòa Anh and Chiêm Thành.



would reach the seagate of Cần Giờ, going to the middle would reach Gia Định, and going to the left would reach the Cửa Đại and Cửa Tiểu [channels]. It was a forest of masts everywhere.

After the price was discussed and set, the traders would ask their servants to carry the rice to the ship. 1 *mạch* (60 cash) could buy 16 *đấu* [16 litres, i.e. 3.75 cash per litre of rice]. Nowhere else can people buy rice as cheaply as here.

Rice collected from Thuận Hóa Protectorate (Vol. 3, pp. 93b-95b)

Before 1773 the following land taxes used to be collected in Thuận Hóa area as follows.

Hương Trà county: 527,670.6 *thăng* according to the rates, less the exempted portion, hence the rice collected was 460,459.9 *thăng*, plus another 57 *thăng* [also collected].[10]

Quảng Điền county: 496,670.1 *thăng* according to the rates, less the exempted portion, hence the rice collected was 481,591.7 *thăng* [240.8 kilolitres].

Phú Vang county: 582,330.1 *thăng* according to the rates, less the exempted portion, hence the rice collected was 479,860.2 *thăng* [239.9 kilolitres]. From 1760 onwards another 91 *thăng* [45.5 litres] used to be collected from this county.

Hải Lăng county: 383,465.6 *thăng* according to the rates, less the exempted portion, hence the rice collected was 347,690.3 *thăng* [173.8 kilolitres].

Đăng Xương county: 428,143.2 *thăng* according to the rates, less the exempted portion, hence the rice collected was 425,902.7 *thăng* [213.0 kilolitres].

Minh Linh county: 300,816.95 *thăng* according to the rates, less the exemption portion, hence the rice collected was 300,607.2 *thăng* [150.3 kilolitres].

Khang Lộc county: 411,679.6 *thăng* according to the rates, less the exempted portion, hence the rice collected was 389,500 *thăng* [194.8 kilolitres].

Lệ Thủy county: 225,272.7 *thăng* according to the rates, less the exemption portion, hence the rice collected was 188,527.8 *thăng* [942.6 kilolitres]. From 1726 onwards another 2 *thăng* [1 litre] used to be collected from this county, and from 1730 another 360,000 *thăng*.[11]

Nam Bố Chính county: 163,387.8 *thăng* according to the rates, less the exemption portion, hence the rice collected was 134,823 *thăng* [674.1 kilolitres]. From 1730 onwards another 70 *thăng* [35 litres] of rice used to be collected from here.

[10] i.e. 230.2 kilolitres of rice in all.
[11] This figure is so large that it must be an error. The Hanoi edition (p. 128) provides the much more reasonable figure of 36.5 *thăng* [18 litres].

The total above amounts to 3,619,283.65 *thăng* [1,809.6 kilolitres]. It does not include the rice received from the *quan đồn điền, quan điền trang*,[12] newly opened rice fields, fields on the river bank and the fields which had been donated to officials.

Land Tax (Vol. 3, p. 98a)

The Nguyễn set up an office [*Ty Nông Sử*] to collect taxes from the land which had been newly cleared. According to the record of this office, in eight counties of Thuận Hóa in 1774, 8,510.39 *mẫu* [30.6 square kilometres] were cleared. The taxes [in rice] for this kind of land were ten *thăng* [5 litres] per *sào* [360 square metres] for grade one land, and five *thăng* per *sào* for grades two and three.

Rice Fields in Thuận Hóa (Vol. 3, pp. 103b-105b)

When the army of the king [the Lê army from the north] occupied Thuận Hóa in 1774, they waived the land tax there for two years. In April 1776 [the *trấn phủ nha môn*, an office acting both as a garrison and mediator] asked county officials to report the amount of government land, private land, land belonging to temples, land along the river banks, land of the *quan điền trang* and *quan đồn điền*[13] categories, land belonging to patriarchal clans, and wasteland. The officials were only required to make a broad estimate rather than measure the land carefully. The procedure was finished within two months, and resulted in a total estimate of 153,181 *mẫu* [55,145 hectares] of cultivated land in Thuận Hóa, detailed as follows:

Hương Trà county: 33,287 *mẫu* 13 *thước* 4 *tấc* [11,983 hectares] of land in total, less 13,845 *mẫu* 5 *sào* 8 *thước* 8 *tấc* [4,984 hectares] of wasteland, forest, hills and graveyards, hence the cultivated land came to 19,442 *mẫu* 1 *sào* 3 *thước* 6 *tấc* [6,999 hectares].

Quảng Điền county: 14,020 *mẫu* 4 *sào* 4 *thước* 1 *tấc* [5,047 hectares] of land in total, less 3,600 *mẫu* 8 *sào* 3 *thước* 3 *tấc* [1,296 hectares] of wasteland, graveyards, dry land, ponds, government gardens and market precincts, hence the cultivated land came to 10,419 *mẫu* 6 *sào* 9 *tấc* [3,751 hectares].

Phú Vang county: 39,574 *mẫu* 6 *sào* 5 *thước* 6 *tấc* [14,247 hectares] of land in total, less 11,540 *mẫu* 4 *sào* 4 *thước* 8 *tấc* 1 *phân* [4,155 hectares] of wasteland, etc., hence the cultivated land came to 28,034 *mẫu* 2 *sào* 7 *tấc* 9 *phân* [10,092 hectares].

[12] Government land using soldiers (*quan đồn điền*) and peasants (*quan điền trang*) as labourers.
[13] See previous footnote.

Đăng Xương county: 25,524 *mẫu* 2 *sào* 8 *thước* 3 *tấc* 3 *phân* [9,189 hectares] of land in total, less 1,919 *mẫu* 5 *sào* 1 *thước* 3 *tấc* 4 *phân*[14] of wasteland, etc., hence the cultivated land came to 14,604 *mẫu* 7 *sào* 6 *thước* 8 *tấc* 8 *phân* [5,258 hectares].

Hải Lăng county: 26,871 *mẫu* 6 *sào* 7 *thước* 2 *tấc* [9,674 hectares] of land in total, less 6,706 *mẫu* 6 *sào* 2 *thước* [2,414 hectares] of wasteland, graveyards, and land ruined by sand, hence the cultivated land came to 20,165 *mẫu* 1 *thước* 2 *tấc* [7,260 hectares].

Minh Linh county: 39,807 *mẫu* 7 *sào* 8 *thước* 5 *tấc* 4 *phân* [14,331 hectares] of land in total, less 15,811 *mẫu* 9 *sào* 11 *thước* [5,692 hectares] of wasteland and forest, hence the cultivated land came to 24,065 *mẫu* 12 *thước* 5 *tấc* 3 *phân* [8,663 hectares].[15]

Lệ Thủy county: 16,643 *mẫu* 5 *sào* 12 *thước* [5,992 hectares] of land in total, less 7,832 *mẫu* 5 *sào* 10 *thước* 8 *tâc* [2,820 hectares] of wasteland and graveyards, hence the cultivated land came to 8,011 *mẫu* 1 *thước* 2 *tâc* [2,884 hectares].[16]

Khang Lộc county: 41,604 *mẫu* 5 *sào* 9 *tâc* 5 *phân* [14,977 hectares] of land in total, less 21,337 *mẫu* 7 *sào* 11 *thước* 5 *phân* [7,681 hectares] of wasteland, hence the cultivated land came to 20,366 *mẫu* 7 *sào* 8 *thước* 9 *tâc* [7,332 hectares].[17]

Nam Bố Chính county: 28,173 *mẫu* 7 *sào* 3 *tâc* [10,142 hectares] of land in total, less 20,831 *mẫu* 3 *thước* [7,499 hectares] of wasteland, hills and forest, hence the cultivated land came to 7,342 *mẫu* 6 *sào* 12 *thước* 3 *tâc* [2,643 hectares].

The land in these nine counties above was 265,507 *mẫu* 4 *sào* 2 *thước* [95,583 hectares] in total, but take away 112,306 *mẫu* 2 *sào* 12 *thước* [40,430 hectares] of wasteland, hence the cultivated land amounted to 153,181 *mẫu* 1 *sào* 5 *thước* 3 *tâc* [55,145 hectares].[18]

Abundance of Rice before the Tây Sơn (Vol. 3, pp. 105b-106a)

The Nguyễn ruler managed the area of Thuận Hóa for more than 200 years, so that the villages and residents here were many. According to the records of 1773,

[14]This figure fails to add up and is moreover so small that it must be an error. The Hanoi edition (p. 135) provides the much more reasonable figure of 10,919 *mẫu* 5 *sào* 1 *thươc* 3 *tấc* 4 *phân* [3,931 hectares].
[15]These figures do not quite add up correctly.
[16]These figures do not quite add up correctly.
[17]These figures do not quite add up correctly.
[18]These figures do not quite add up correctly. Indeed, the Hanoi edition (p. 136) reads 112,326 *mẫu* [40, 437] hectares of wasteland.

there were nine counties in Thuận Hóa, and 126,857 people lived in 862 villages, hamlets and isolated settlements. The taxes of 153,600 *quan* which they paid instead of corvée seemed like a fortune. Yet the cultivated land was only 153,181 *mẫu* [551.5 sq km].

In the old days the traders in Đồng Nai [in the south] used to transport rice and sell it in Phú Xuân. The price was only 3 *mạch* for 10 *thăng* [23 litres] which equals one *hộc*, enough for one person's food for one month. That was why people here did not work hard on the land.

Now, as a result of the rebellion in Quy Nhơn [the Tây Sơn uprising], the people in the Gia Định area could not go to Phú Xuân, and everybody was worried about food. Therefore, when the army of the [Trịnh] king came, not only was the price of rice high, but the price of land was high too. The people in Hương Trà, Quảng Điền and Phú Vang disputed with each other about the land all the time; they did not hesitate in spending their money to fight for a piece of land.

Land and Land Tax in Quảng Nam Protectorate (Vol. 3, pp. 108b-112b)

There are 25 counties and one region in Quảng Nam. Abundant land belongs to the villages and to the patriarchal clans here. Wasteland, ruined land, forest, etc., had already been exempted from taxation. From 1764 and 1767 onwards the recorded taxes in Quảng Nam were as follows:

Điện Bàn prefecture (taxes collected by the *Lệnh Sử Ty*): An Nông and Diên Khánh counties had 23,817 *mẫu* 5 *sào* 8 *thước* 1 *tấc* [8,574 hectares] of taxable land which paid 538,019 *thăng* [269.0 kilolitres] of unmilled rice.

Hòa Vinh and Tân Phúc counties had 17,125 *mẫu* 10 *thước* 4 *tấc* [6,165 hectares] of taxable land which paid 385,436 *thăng* [192.7 kilolitres] of unmilled rice.

Phú Châu paid no taxes.

Thăng Hóa prefecture (taxes collected by the *Tướng Thần Lại Ty*): Hà Đông, Duy Xuyên, Lễ Dương Chính, Lễ Dướng Tân and several *thuộc*, altogether had 72,357 *mẫu* 11 *thước* 2 *tấc* 4 *phân* [26,049 hectares] of taxable land which paid 1,681,294 *thăng* [840.6 kilolitres] of unmilled rice. The figure does not include the taxes paid in cash from government land, nor the taxes paid in sticky rice from the land belonging to patriarchal clans, nor the taxes paid in cash by villages which directly collected the land rent, nor the money paid by the temples which directly collected the land rent, nor the land rent paid by Thanh Hà village.

Quảng Ngãi prefecture: Bình Sơn, Chương Nghĩa [Chương Mỹ] and Mô Hoa counties had 52,639 *mẫu* 2 *sào* 3 *thước* 3 *tấc* 6 *phân* [18,950 hectares] of taxable land which paid 1,221,882 *thăng* [610.9 kilolitres] of unmilled rice. The figure

does not include the taxes paid in cash by Thanh Hảo village and Cù Lao Ri which directly collected the land rent.

Quy Nhơn prefecture: Bồng Sơn, Phù Ly and Tuy Viễn counties had 72,600 *mẫu* 5 *sào* [26,136 hectares] of taxable land, and *quan điền trang*.[19]

Taxes from Thời Tú, Thời Đôn, Thời Hòa and Hà Bạc, and Hà Nghiêu in Quy Nhơn were collected by the *Lại Ty*.[20] There were 20,343.2 *mẫu* 2 *sào* 5 *thước* 3 *phân* 4.5 *ly* [7,324 hectares] of taxable land, which paid 1,526 sacks at 14 *thăng* per sack, plus 5.5 *cáp* of milled rice [21,365 *thăng*, i.e. 10.7 kilolitres], and 323 sacks at 12 *bát* per sack plus 8 *bát* 1.5 *cáp* of *canh* rice[21] [3,884 *bát*, i.e. 1.9 kilolitres, or 12.6 kilolitres of rice in total].[22] These figures do not include the taxes collected from Thời Thông in Tuy Viễn county.

Phú Yên prefecture: The taxes from Đồng Xuân and Tuy Hòa counties were collected by the *Tướng Thần Lại Ty*, and amounted to 128,904 *thăng*[23] [64.5 kilolitres] of unmilled rice. The figure does not include the taxes in cash from wasteland, newly opened land, mulberry fields, etc.

Bình Khang prefecture: Quảng Đức and Tân An counties and Há Bạc *thuộc* had 648 *mẫu* 8 *thước* 3 *tấc*[24] [233.3 hectares] of taxable land which paid 161,421 *thăng* [80.7 kilolitres] of unmilled rice. The figure does not include taxes paid in cash from wasteland, etc.

Diên Khánh prefecture: Phúc Điền, Vĩnh Xương and Hoa Châu counties, and Hà Bạc and Tân Ninh *thuộc*, altogether had 5,920 *mẫu* 1 *thước* 1 *tấc* [2,131 hectares] paying 405,959 *thăng* 6 *cáp* 2 *thược* [203.0 kilolitres] of unmilled rice. The figure does not include taxes paid in cash from wasteland, etc.

[19]The Saigon edition is incomplete on the record. The Hanoi edition reads: 'Bồng Sơn, Phù Ly and Tuy Viễn counties had 72,600 *mẫu 5 sào* 12 *thước* 8 *tấc* of taxable land which paid 1,540,678 *thăng* [770.3 kilolitres] of unmilled rice. The figure does not include the taxes paid in cash collected from the mulberry fields, wasteland, and land of the [government's] *quan điền trang* category.'

[20]Possibly the *Tướng Thần Lại Ty*. The Hanoi edition (p. 139) says it was collected by the *Lệnh Sử Ty*.

[21]Not identified.

[22]The Hanoi edition (p. 139) reads '1,526 sacks at 10 *thăng* per sack plus 5.5 *cáp* of rice, and 323 sacks at 23 *bát* per sack plus 8 *bát* 1.5 *cáp* of rice', i.e. 22,698 *bát* or 11.3 kilolitres of rice. Both editions imply an average tax of 1.6 litres of rice per hectare of taxable land, much less than the c.30 litres of rice per hectare calculable for most of the prefectures and for the country as a whole, although it should be noted that Phú Yên analogously yielded only 1.4 litres of rice per hectare of taxable land.

[23]The Hanoi edition (p. 139) reads: "Taxable land was 128,940 *mẫu* [46,418 hectares] which paid 128,994 *thăng* 7 *cáp* [64.5 kilolitres] of unmilled rice."

[24]The figure looks an order of magnitude too low in view of the amount of tax collected. The Hanoi edition, p. 139, gives 6,148 *mẫu* [2,213 hectares] of taxable land, i.e. 36.5 litres of rice per hectare of taxable land.

Bình Thuận prefecture: Tân Bình, An Phúc and Hòa Đa counties and several *thuộc*; no taxes paid.

Gia Định prefecture: Tân Bình[25] county had 1,452 *mẫu* 2 *sào* 8 *thước* 1 *tấc* [523 hectares] of taxable land which paid 29,085 *thăng* 3 *cáp* 3 *thược* [14.5 kilolitres] of unmilled rice, while other taxes were not included.

Phúc Long county had 787 *mẫu* 6 *sào* 11 *thước* 7 *tấc* [283 hectares] of taxable land which paid 15,756 *thăng* 3 *cáp* 8 *thược* [7.9 kilolitres] of unmilled rice, while other taxes were not included.

Định Viễn and Tân An *thuộc* paid no taxes.

The figures above do not include rice from mountain land and grassland and the taxpayers there.

The total taxable land listed above came to 270,000 mẫu [97,200 hectares]. The annual collected taxes were 6,048,526 *thăng* [3,024.3 kilolitres] of unmilled rice, 68,040 *thăng* [34.0 kilolitres] of milled rice, and 20,357 *bát* and 1.5 *cáp* [10.2 kilolitres] of *canh* rice.[26]

Land in Đồng Nai in the Gia Định area is the most fertile land. From the 1769 records for the mountain lands we read the following. In the Tân Bình county there were 750 taxpayers, who paid 1,902 *hộc* [71.3 kilolitres] of rice. Phúc Long county had 245 taxpayers who paid 576 *hộc* [21.6 kilolitres] of rice. Định Viễn county had 2,937 taxpayers who paid 6,144 *hộc* [230.4 kilolitres] of rice.

The official Nguyễn Khoa Thuyên, the *cai bạ* [customs officer] of Long Hồ Dinh and marquis of Hiến Đức, gives the following information.[27] Quy An and Quy Hóa *thuộc* of Tân Bình county [in Gia Định] had 3,000 taxpayers and 5,000 rice-field plots in each *thuộc*. The tax rate here was 6 *hộc* [225 litres] for grade 1 land, 5 *hộc* [187.5 litres] for grade 2 land, and 4 *hộc* [150 litres] for grade 3 land.

Tam Lach *thuộc* had more than 4,000 taxpayers and more than 5,000 rice-field plots.

Bả Canh, Bà Lai and Bà Kiến *thuộc* had more than 4,000 taxpayers and more than 4,000 rice-field plots. The tax rate was 4 *hộc* [150 litres] for grade 1 land, 3 *hộc* [112.5 litres] for grade 2 land, and 2 *hộc* [75 litres] for grade 3 land. Phúc Long county had more than 6,000 rice-field plots. The tax rate was 10 *hộc* [375 litres] for grade 1 land, 8 *hộc* [300 litres] for grade 2 land, and 6 *hộc* [225 litres] for grade 3 land.

[25]Thus there would seem to have been two administrative places called Tân Bình ('Newly Pacified'), one in Bình Thuận and one in Gia Định.

[26]The Hanoi edition (p. 140) reads: 'Milled rice 61,040 *thăng* 5.5 *cáp*, and *canh* rice 20,357 *bát* 1.5 *cáp*.'

[27]The ratio of taxable *hộc* of rice per extent of land is not given. It might be per rice-field plot. All this information refers to the area from Saigon south to the Mekong delta.

Định Viễn had more than 7,000 taxpayers and more than 7,000 plots of rice fields. The tax rate here was 4 *hộc* [150 litres] for grade 1 land, 3 *hộc* [112.5 litres] for grade 2 land, and 2 *hộc* [75 litres] for grade 3 land. There is some more information from this same person, Nguyễn Khoa Thuyên. In places like Tân Bình, Phúc Long, Quy An and Quy Hóa, if the people plant one *hộc* of unmilled rice they can harvest 100 *hộc*. And in places like Bả Canh and Định Viễn, not only do the people plant the rice without ploughing the land beforehand, but they also harvest 300 *hộc* for every *hộc* of planted rice. It can readily be imagined how fertile the land is there.

The Taxation System (Vol. 3, pp. 122a-123b)

As the head of the village, the Nguyễn official called *tướng thần* could collect the taxes from the people. Before 1665 the Nguyễn set a rule for presentations. Anyone who wanted to be a *tướng thần* could be one if he had paid 35 *quan* to the Nguyễn ruler, seven *quan* to the government, and five *quan* for the officials' certification and salary. Therefore everyone tried to be the first to pay the money and to become an official. Even at present you can find 16 or 17 *tướng thần* and more than 20 heads [*xã trưởng*] in a village. Every one of them works as an official, but the chief head has the word *tri* [to know] or *ấp* [to escort] at the beginning of his title.

Every official had several dependent peasant households. These peasants were free from all government corvée, and their commissions were given to the official as his salary.[28]

The Nguyễn ruler also asked the officials to pay *tiền lễ hầu phu* [money from the servants] and *gạo lễ hầu trung* [rice as a gift] to the Nguyễn ruler. They had to hire ships to carry them to Phú Xuân. The records for 1769 read as follows:

The prefecture of Thăng Hóa:

Tri phủ [the chief official of the prefecture]	1.5 *quan* money
	15 *bát* [7.5 litres] of rice
Tri huyện [the chief official of a county] or *huấn đạo*	1.7 *quan* money
	15 *bát* [7.5 litres] of rice

The number of officials in the prefecture of Thăng Hóa was 278; they paid 213.7 *quan* of money and 2,727 *bát* [1,364 litres] of rice.

The government also collected money from *đinh* [men aged 20 to 60 who had to pay taxes] for the officials' salaries [*ngụ lộc*] at 12 cash per person; every

[28]Each year people were supposed to do some corvée (*yong* in Chinese, *thuế dung* in Vietnamese) for the government. If they could not do it, they could pay a certain amount of money instead of doing corvée. Since these people did not work for the *thuế dung*, they had to pay money to the official responsible for them.

hundred people [also] had to pay 5 *thăng* [1 litre] of rice. A big village had to pay 1 *mạch* [60 cash], and a medium-sized village 30 cash. If the money had been threaded, then [the *đinh*] only paid 7.2 cash per person. In 1769 there were 14,349 people in the prefecture of Thăng Hóa; 483,336 *quan* of money and 714.9 *thăng* [357 litres] of rice were collected from them. Then the government hired people to thread the money into *quan* and pack the rice into sacks. The wage for threading 100 *quan* of money was 0.4 *quan*, and for packing one sack of rice was 0.1 *quan*. [These people] would then send the proceeds to the government.

Trade Taxes (Vol. 4, pp. 2a-3a)

Taxes for local trade:

The taxes in 1774 on mountains, ponds, passes and markets in Thuận Hóa and Quảng Nam amounted to 76,467.240 *quan*, of which the taxes from Quảng Nam amounted to six tenths. The taxes from Thuận Hóa were 11,222.254 *quan* [sic]. It was said that the taxes from Quảng Nam were levied as from the period of Trương Phúc Loan,[29] but not by any former Nguyễn ruler.

Thuận Hóa had paid only tribute during the Hồng Đức period [1470-1497]; no tax had been paid before the reign of the Nguyễn.[30] According to the official record of the Nguyễn in 1774, the rice [levied as] land tax and *công thuế* [official tax] amounted to 3,533,360 *thăng* [8,130 kilolitres]; Quảng Nam was established after Lê Thánh Tôn fought with the Chams in 1471, and it had only three prefectures [*phủ*]; after the Nguyễn attacked Champa and acquired most of its land, its people became registered households, so that two more prefectures were established in Quảng Nam and many taxes were collected.

The people who lived in the two counties of Sa Bôi and Thuận Bình were all barbarians. These counties were upstream from the districts [*nguyên*[31]] of Cam Lộ in Đang Xương county and Sài Nguyên in Hải Lăng county. [The people had] paid tribute during the Hồng Đức period, but the Nguyễn ruler now appointed some officials to collect taxes. There were two kinds of taxes: one was an official tax, paid to the government; the other was a personal tax, paid to the county magistrate as his salary.

There was an official in charge of collecting taxes from the two villages [*mường*] of Chà Bôn and Thượng Kê in Sa Bôi. The official tax for these two villages included: one male elephant at least 5.5 *thước* [2 metres tall]; two cotton

[29]See footnote 2.

[30]Hồng Đức was the reign title of the Lê emperor, Lê Thánh Tông, who ruled from 1460 to 1497.

[31]*Nguyên* was a special name for the small regions where minority peoples lived in compact communities during the Nguyễn period.

curtains; 20 bolts of white cloth;[32] 100 baskets of polished glutinous rice, each basket supposed to hold 30 *thăng* [15 litres]; four pairs of rhinoceros horns; 20 big knives; two small baskets of flints [stone strike-a-lights], each basket supposed to hold 50 *thăng* [25 litres]. If the official bought things, he paid three *mạch* for each basket; if he bought an ox he paid five *quan*; and the price of five *cân* [3 kilograms] of yellow wax was 5.5 *quan*.

The two villages [*mường*] of Trầm Bồn and Xương Khâm in Thuận Bình county also had an official in charge of collecting taxes [which were approximately the same as the taxes paid by the two villages mentioned above]. If these four villages paid all the taxes specified, the officials would give them three ancient *quan* coins, one bolt of red satin and two bolts of thin silk, one *quan* coin for the elephants' care, one pig (equal to three *quan* coins), three jars of *nước mắm* [fish sauce], three jars of wine, two sacks of rice and two baskets of salt. But they could not have these things if they did not pay enough taxes.

Trade in the Highlands (Vol. 4, pp. 4a-6b)

Cam Lộ village of Đang Xương county was upstream of Điệu [Ao] Giang [today's Cam Lộ River], which leads to Cửa Việt [Việt Harbour] downstream and upstream to Ai Lao [Laos], so all the barbarians went upstream to the kingdoms of Lạc Hồn [Savannakhet] and Vạn Tượng [Vientiane], and to the prefectures of Trấn Ninh [on the Laotian border of modern Nghệ An province] and Quy Hợp [Nghệ An province]. From [Cam Lộ] village, people could arrive at the *phường* [hamlet of] Khang Yên in a single day. Here was a tollgate named đồn Ba Trang, also called đồn Hiếu Giang. By decree of the Nguyễn ruler, the traders who wanted to trade upstream should go to this tollgate to get a certificate before they intended to trade in upstream areas. The tax for trading in this area was 110 *quan* per person a year.

In two days one could travel from this tollgate [đồn Ba Trang], and arrive at the border of Laos which was on the edge of Đại Giang [Se Pone, or Xê Pôn in Vietnamese]. Here the Nguyễn ruler set up the quarters for six *thuyền*[33] named *dinh Ai Lao* [battalion at Laos].

On the right bank of the river at Cam Lộ village there was a tollgate called đồn Cây Lúa. The regulation there was the same as at đồn Hiếu Giang [đồn Ba Trang], the traders paid taxes and received certificates to go to Bang Hieng and Vạn Tướng [Vientiane].

[32] If the bolt was still of the dimensions given for the Nguyễn Hoàng period, i.e. 8.2 square metres, this amounted to 163 square metres of cloth.
[33] *Thuyền* was the smallest military unit of the Nguyễn lord; the establishment was from 30 to 100 soldiers.

To the left of đồn Hiếu Giang stood the đồn tuần Nguru Cuốc [Nguru Cuốc tollgate], where the tax payable was 120 *quan* per year.

Upstream from Hiếu Giang on the left bank there were some barbarian villages which grew numerous plants and raised abundant livestock. Traders from other places often came with salt, fish sauce, dried fish, iron wares, copper pots, silver hairpins and bracelets in exchange for millet, chickens, ox, hemp, wax, rattan, mulberry bark [to produce paper], barbarian cloth, and curtains from the barbarian peoples. When the trading was finished, the traders hired elephants to carry the goods back to Cam Lộ.

The barbarians also carried goods to sell in Cam Lộ. One elephant could carry 60 buckets of rice, with each pair of buckets containing 20 bowls of rice [i.e. 600 bowls of rice in all]. There was also a barbarian market. They drove 300 oxen to sell in the market and the price of an ox was 10 *quan* at the most, while an elephant was worth two *thoi* [756 grams] of silver.

If the government imposed less tax on trading and stopped collecting the tax for elephants, then the people could bring more rice from Laos to feed the people at the border and extract large profits from the trade.

According to the old regulations decreed by the Nguyễn rulers, there were two kinds of taxes; tolls, and the tax on *thổ nghi* [local collection] from the people who went back and forth up and downstream (e.g. to obtain rattan). The toll was as follows:

Traded item:	Tax:
1 elephant	2 *quan* of tax,1 *quan* in *công phac* [commission]
1 slave	as above
1 *tael* of gold	5 *mạch* of tax, 5 *mạch* in commission
1 *thoi* [bar] of silver	8 *mạch* in tax, 4 *mạch* in commission
1 *quan* of ancient coins	24 cash in tax, 12 cash in commission
1 cân [600 grams] of beeswax	1 *quan* of tax
1 cân [600 grams] of crushed copper	1 *quan* of tax
1 cân [600 grams] of silkworms	1 *quan* of tax
1 copper pot	1 *quan* of tax
1 basket of cotton	1 *quan* of tax
2 buckets of rattan bark, betel, gunny, hempseed, rice, beans or millet	1 *quan* of tax
2 buckets of rattan	3,000 cash in tax
1 pig	40 cash in tax, 12 cash in commission
1 ox	2 *mạch* in tax
1 inferior quality, wooden raft	3 *mạch* in tax, 3 *mạch* in commission

1 boat	30 cash in tax and commission
1 elephant or 1 boat for carrying goods across the river	30 cash in tax and commission

Cotton, silkworms, wax and *quan* of money were not to be carried by elephant.[34]

People who were specialist traders should pay the *thổ nghi* tax:

1 elephant	1.4 *quan* of *thổ nghi* tax
1 *quan* money	24 cash of *thổ nghi* tax
3 oxen, or 3 pigs or more	8 *mạch* of *thổ nghi* tax (alternatively 2 oxen or 1 pig respectively)

Nevertheless, the people who produced perfume in Mai Đàn village, who carried timber in Phước Giang and Mỹ Cương villages and who traded sundry goods in Hương Cần were exempted from paying taxes.

Upstream from Sái Nguyên in Hải Lăng county there were 12 hamlets (*phường*), all of whose people lived along small rivers.

Personal Taxes (Vol. 4, p. 7a)

As regards the personal tax collected by the official in Sái Nguyên: he bought 20 baskets of glutinous rice with 30 *thăng* [15 litres] in each basket, and paid 3 *mạch* for each basket; he bought 1 *cân* [600 grams] of wax which should cost 5 *quan* but he paid only 5 *mạch*.

The personal tax collected for the salary of the official of Sái Nguyên was: 20,000 *tầu lá cơ*,[35] eight rolls of long (dragon) rattan, eight rolls of iron rattan, 10,000 cash worth of rice, one basket of dried meat, 1 basket of mixed perfume, 1 pair of rattan mats, 15 baskets of glutinous rice each holding 15 *thăng* [7.5 litres], and two baskets of grain holding 30 *thăng* [15 litres].

The Tax on Highlanders (Vol. 4, pp. 8a-9a)

The three *nguyên* [districts] of Yên Đái, Yên Nẻo and Cẩm Ly were located upriver of Khang Lộc county. The people there were barbarians. According to the tax record for 1744, the tax collected from here was very substantial indeed. The tax collected in Yên Đái district was as follows.

First grade:
Vũ Phan Triển (and his wife and children): 15 *quan* new year's money, 45 *quan* of tax; Vũ Phan Đa (as above): 17 *quan* new year's money, 53 *quan* tax.

[34]The reasons for this prohibition are unknown.
[35]Not identified.

Vũ Phan Mạnh (and his wife): 15 *quan* new year's money, 37 *quan* tax; Phan Tinh (and his wife): 15 *quan* new year's money, 38 *quan* tax.

Third grade:
Vũ Phan Xung (and his wife): 10 *quan* new year's money, 35 *quan* tax; Vũ Phan Đình (and his wife): 10 *quan* new year's money, 34 *quan* tax; Phan Tinh (and his wife): 8 *quan* new year's money, 24 *quan* tax; A-y-Vu: 7 *quan* new year's money, 13 *quan* tax; Phan Đức: 5 *quan* new year's money, 10 *quan* tax.

There were some transmigrants gathered into two small villages under the control of Yên Đái district. [The village of] Tổng Vùng paid 35 *quan* tax, while Châu Bấu paid 33.6 *quan*.

There were only four Siamese *đinh* [tax-payers] in each village; their taxes and new year's money were 15 *quan*. Barbarian people such as the Y Ta *man* and Đạo Hồi *man* paid 12 *quan* tax.

The taxes and new year's money collected in the three districts of Yên Đái, Yên Nẻo and Cẩm Ly amounted to 994.63 *quan*. Of this amount 612 *quan* were for taxes. The new year's money was used for the rites to open the mountains (*mở núi*)[36] and pray for good harvests (*cầu hoa*), for feasts (*ăn mừng và hát xướng*), and for some of the expenses resulting from liaison between the village heads spreading announcements among the people.

Lowland-Highland Relations (Vol. 4, pp. 9b-10a)

The Nguyễn ruler sent Marquis Minh Đức, whose family name was Lê, to be the official of *cổn-suất*[37] and control the *man* people [barbarians] there. He organized the villagers into a force to defend themselves from the attacks of the evil *man* [barbarians who did not obey the Nguyễn ruler]. Another responsibility of the official was to collect taxes.

Any person who lived downstream and wanted to trade upstream had to apply to his or her village head, stating when he or she would return, and [also] had to pay the taxes. [Traders] were not allowed to exceed the [stated] time limit as a prophylactic measure against possible future trouble.

People who went upstream had to pay 30 cash for the boat, whereas people who went downstream had to pay with two bundles of the goods which they had traded. Seven *mạch* had to be paid for ten trees of *kiền-kiền*,[38] two *mạch* for ten ordinary trees.

[36]i.e. rites in preparation for extracting forest produce from the mountains.
[37]Not identified.
[38]*Phoebe nanmu*.

There was a furnace for forging knives on the way to the mountains. Traders who bought 100 large knives paid 1.2 *quan* [of tax], and 6 *mạch* for 100 small knives. The boats which carried 200 *cân* [120 kilograms] of charcoal paid 7 *mạch*.

Coinage (Vol. 4, pp. 21a-22a)

Thuận Hóa and Quảng Nam did not produce copper. Each year when the Japanese ships came with red copper, the court ordered its officials to buy it immediately at its cost of 45 *quan* in ancient money. If the ships from Fujian and Canton carried red copper, they had to declare it and sell it at the price mentioned above. The traders could only buy what was left.

The coins produced before Kai Yuan of the Tang dynasty, and before Chun Hua and Xiang Fu of the Song dynasty, were excellent. They could not be damaged even if buried underground. These coins were numerous before 1743 and 1744 in the north, but for unknown reasons they were rarely seen after that. It was not until 1774 when the army of Lê went into Thuận Hóa that they saw more than 300,000 *quan* in excellent coins in the storehouse of the Nguyễn ruler, without any bad coins among them, not even one. Only then did the people realize that it was because the ships had carried these good coins from the north to Thuận Hóa.

Coins cast by the Mạc with the characters 'Thái Bình An Pháp' were also carried to Thuận Hóa. At first the Nguyễn rulers also copied this kind of coin with the characters 'Thái Bình'. They could occasionally be seen in the market but they carried a value only one third of today's coins.

The Nguyễn rulers also used coins [minted by] Kang Xi [1662-1722] of the Qing dynasty, but people tended to melt them down to make copper wares, so the coins became scarcer. Some coins were cast during the period of Đỉnh Quốc Công [Nguyễn Phúc Chu, 1691-1725], but this was very costly.

Hiếu Quốc Công [Nguyễn Phúc Khoát, r.1738-1765] accepted the suggestion of a Chinese man called Huang to buy tin from the Dutch and cast tin coins in Xã Lương Quán. The cost of [producing] 100 *cân* [60 kilograms] was eight *quan*.

The lead coin was copied from the Song dynasty *Xiang Fu* coins. It was initially of very good quality, thick and hard; it could be melted down but not broken. On top of that, the Nguyễn ruler removed the ban against private individuals casting coins, although people rarely availed themselves of the right. Initially the lead coinage was very convenient both to officials and to the common people.[39]

[39] *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục* (Vol. 4, p. 37b) states that in 1746, 1747 and 1748, the Nguyễn ruler cast coins worth 12,396 *quan* but does not mention what type of coin. However, according to Vol. 10 of *Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên*, as many as 72,396 *quan* of white lead coins were cast in the same three years. The latter statement is more complete and appears more reliable.

Therefore the court began to store copper coins and not to issue them to the common people. Because the copper coins became more and more expensive, the people vied with each other in casting lead coins, and more than one hundred foundries were established. One kind of lead coin called 'Thiên Minh Thông Bảo' had black lead mixed in and was very thin and small. People refused to accept it because it was ugly. Thus the lead coin dropped dreadfully in value: initially one lead coin equalled one copper coin in value, but at the end three lead coins equalled one copper coin. Even so, people would rather pick out copper coins and leave the lead coins. The ships from overseas refused to accept lead coins, rather they preferred to exchange rice and salt for gold, silver and sundry goods, and then leave.

Coins cast by the victorious Lê in Thuận Hóa (Vol. 4, pp 23a-23b)

In 1776, after the army of Lê came into Thuận Hóa, the Lê officials collected the damaged copper guns they had pillaged during the war, and some heavy copper wares, to cast coins bearing the characters for Cảnh Hưng Thuận Bảo[40] with each coin weighing 0.1 *lạng* [4 grams].

The casting began on the 20th February and finished on the 30th June [by lunar calendar]. 790 *tạ* [47,400 kilograms] of copper were used. To every *tạ* [100 *cân* or 60 kilograms] of copper, people added 15.6 *cân* [9.4 kilograms] of tin and 43.4 *cân* [26 kilograms] of lead; from this combined weight of 159 *cân* [95.4 kilograms], 38 *quan* could be cast.

Finally 30,362 *quan* were cast, but the salary for the craftsmen (seven *quan* for every 100 *cân*, and 5,593 *quan* all together) had to be taken out.[41] In addition, the cost of buying the charcoal and olive oil [sic] was 779 *quan* [approximately one *quan* for 100 *cân* of copper], leaving 23,990 *quan* [net].

The Duty on Overseas Trade (Vol. 4, pp. 31a-32a)

Thuận Hóa is connected with Quảng Nam both by land and by sea. Going south from Quảng Nam led to some other countries, and the trip by sea from Fujian and Canton took only three to four days. It was therefore a place in which ships have gathered from ancient times. Ever since the Nguyễn occupied the area, they have gained much from the taxes on the shipping trade. According to an official who used to impose the duties on the ships, the arrival and departure taxes for the various ships were as follows:

[40] Cảnh Hưng is the reign title of Lê Hiển Tôn, r.1740-1786.

[41] The figures supplied would indicate the craftsmen's salary was 7.3 *quan* for every 100 *cân*.

	Tax on arrival (in *quan*)	Tax on departure (in *quan*)
Shanghai	3,000	[not mentioned]
Canton	3,000	300
Fujian	2,000	200
Hainan Island	500	50
Europe	8,000	800
Macao	4,000	400
Japan	4,000	400
Siam	2,000	500
Philippines	2,000	200
Palembang	500	50
Hà Tiên	300	30
Sơn Đô [Red River delta]	300	30

In 1771, sixteen ships arrived at Hội An and 38,000 *quan* of taxes were collected in duties. In 1772, twelve ships came to Hội An and 14,300 *quan* were collected in duties. In 1773, six ships came to Hội An and 3,200 *quan* were collected in duties.

Trade at Hội An (Vol. 4, pp 34b-35b)

The following statement was made by a Cantonese trader whose name is Chen.

It is only six days and nights from Guangzhou to Thuận Hóa and Quảng Nam on the sea, [then proceeding] either from the seaport of Hàn[42] along the Phú Xuân River [Hương Giang] to Phố Thanh Hà,[43] or to Hội An via its seaport of Đại Chiêm. It takes only four days and nights and one *canh* [about two hours] to Sơn Nam, but no goods other than rice can be obtained. Furthermore, only pepper is available from Thuận Hóa, whereas such an abundance of goods can be carried from Quảng Nam that seemingly nothing cannot be obtained there; it is superior to all the other ports of Southeast Asia. The goods come from Thăng Hoa, Điện Bàn, Quy Nhơn, Quảng Ngãi, Bình Khang and Nha Trang, carried by ships, boats and horses, by land and by sea, and assembled in Hội An. That is why the Chinese like to come and buy goods to carry back. The goods are so abundant here that even a hundred large ships could not carry them all away from here.

As to the prices, he said that in Quảng Nam people would call 100 *cân* [60 kilograms] as equal to one *tạ*. The costs per *tạ* were as follows:

[42] Being a northerner, Lê Quý Đôn here may have mistaken Cửa Hàn (today's Đà Nẵng) for Cửa Thuận An.

[43] A commercial centre, which developed at the end of the seventeenth century, just north of today's Huế. Also known as Phố Lở.

betel nut	3 *quan*
pepper	20 *quan*
round cardamon	5 *quan*
sappanwood	6 *quan*
Amonmum xanthioides nuts[44]	12 *quan*
ebony wood	6 *mạch*
lacquer wood	1 *quan*
cyprus wood	1.2 *quan*
rhinoceros horn	500 *quan*
edible bird's nest	200 *quan*
deers' antlers	15 *quan*
shark's fin	14 *quan*
dried shrimps	6 *quan*
snails' heads	12 *quan*
hawksbill turtle	180 *quan*
elephants' tusks	40 *quan*
be lua ma [not identified]	12 *quan*
crystal sugar	4 *quan*
white sugar	2 *quan*
1 *cân* of calambac	120 *quan*
1 *thoi* [bar] of gold	180 *quan*
1 bolt of thin silk	3.5 *quan*

Here the best were the Chinese cassia trees, agalloch from the eaglewood, and pearls. Red sandalwood was also produced here, but the quality was not as good as in Siam.

When asked how well the goods brought from China sold here, the man said that the goods sold out very quickly, [and soon] nothing was left.

Coloured gauze, satin, brocade and cloth; all kinds of medicinal herbs; paper whether golden, silver or coloured; slender sticks of incense; threads whether golden, silver or coloured; pigments; clothes, shoes and socks; *do lo* flannelette [possibly *patola*, from Java]; glass mirrors, writing brushes and ink sticks; needles and knobs; all kinds of tables and chairs; metals; porcelains and stonewares; and all kinds of food. [All] were bought and sold here, and everyone got what he or she wanted.

[44] Related to the cardamon plant (*Amomum subulatum*).

State Revenue (Vol. 4, p. 36b)

During the time of Hiếu Quốc Công [Nguyễn Phúc Khoát, r.1738-1765], one of his eunuchs named Mai Văn Hoan compiled statistical tables of the taxes, income and expenses for Thuận Hóa and Quảng Nam from 1746 to 1752. In one year [not specified] the income was about 338,100 *quan*, and the expenses were about 364,400 *quan*; whereas in another year the income was about 423,300 *quan* and the expenses were only about 364,400 *quan*. Generally speaking the income of the Nguyễn was more than enough to cover the expenses.

The Granaries (Vol. 4, pp. 37b-40a)

There were seven granaries in Thuận Hóa.

Thọ Khang granary, in the area of Thọ Khang hamlet in Phú Vang county. This granary included ten small granaries called Tiền Đực, Nồi Trường, Kiền Kiền, Miếu Ông, Nội Hoanh, Nội Ôi, Nội Cơ Hữu, Vĩnh Xương, Nội An Nhân and Nội Nga. Each small granary had two buildings to hold the rice taxed from the three counties of Phú Vang, Quảng Điền and Hương Trà; the rice transported from the granaries of Đạm Thủy, Canh Dương and Tân An in Quảng Nam; the rice from Quy Nhơn, Quy Hóa, Tân An [in the Mekong delta], Bà Canh, and the rice of the people who had committed crimes leading to their rice being confiscated. This [Thọ Khang] granary was guarded by a hundred soldiers who belonged to the first *thuyền* of Lão Nhuệ Yên.

Nguyệt Biều granary, in Nguyệt Biều village within Hương Trà county. It held the rice transported from Quảng Nam, Gia Định and Quy Nhơn, and the rice from the three hamlets of Thiên Mụ, Quản Thảo and Cảnh Dương, and some rice from the three counties of Hương Trà, Quảng Điền and Phú Vang. Ammunition, fish sauce and salt, etc., were also stored here. This granary was guarded by the second *thuyền* of Lão Nhuệ Yên.

Thạch Hàn granary, in Thạch Hàn village within Hải Lăng county, held the rice from Hải Lăng and Đang Xương counties and was guarded by 30 soldiers.

Lai Cách granary, in Lai Cách village within Minh Linh, held the rice from Minh Linh and Hải Lăng counties.

Bến Đầu was a granary which held rice temporarily. There were two *đội*[45] in charge of transporting the rice here to other granaries.

Yên Trách granary, in Yên Trách village within Lệ Thủy county consisted of two small granaries. The first one had 45 rooms and the second 42. The two of them held the rice from Quy Nhơn and Gia Định.

[45] *Đội* was a unit higher than the *thuyền*. A *đội* could comprise three to five *thuyền*, usually representing 220-500 soldiers.

Khang Lộc had two small granaries, one with 52 rooms and the other with 43. They held the rice from Khang Lộc county. 29 rooms were used for storing salt and fish sauce.

Lệ Thủy had two small granaries, one with 52 rooms and the other with 43. It stored the county's rice.[46]

Trung Trinh granary, in Trung Trinh village within Khang Lộc, stored the rice transported from the two granaries of Canh Dương and Phương Gia in Quảng Nam.

Trường Dục granary, in Trường Dục village within Khang Lộc county, held the rice from the Nam Bố Chính and Khang Lộc counties.[47]

Quảng Nam had twelve granaries . . . .

The granaries of the Nguyễn had walls of cogograss. Because the granaries were easily damaged, when the taxes were collected money for repairing the granaries was also collected. This came to 37 cash for every 100 *thăng* [50 litres] of rice. But it seemed that [the granaries were] not well maintained for when the troops of the [northern] king's army entered the Yên Trách granary in 1774, they saw that it was leaky and the salt and fish sauce in it were no longer edible.

Nevertheless, the regulations for storage were very strict. According to a soldier who used to guard the Thọ Khang granary in 1764, when the county officials measured the rice in the granary and found that some rice had been wasted [owing to leakages in the granary], they ordered that the rice paid as a salary to the officials and soldiers be collected and returned, to compensate for the wasted rice.

Transportation (Vol. 4, pp. 41a-41b)

Most of the army of the Nguyễn ruler was based in Quảng Nam where [more rice] was collected as a tax than in Thuận Hóa. Indeed, rice even had to be brought from Quảng Nam to feed the army units [in Thuận Hóa]. The government set up an office to manage the transportation from Nam Bố Chính to Gia Định in Đồng Nai. Anybody who took a ship or boat along this route had to be registered with the government. Then the officials asked the person to pay the transportation fee according to the width [measured from the centre to the edge] of

[46] These two sentences repeat the first two sentences of the preceding paragraph, except that Khang Lộc has been replaced with Lệ Thủy. These sentences would appear to have been inserted as a copying error, especially because this mention of Lệ Thủy is isolated from the previous mention of Lệ Thủy (i.e. Yên Trách granary).

[47] The text mentions seven granaries in Thuận Hóa, but lists eight under individual names (Thọ Khang, Nguyệt Biều, Thạch Hàn, Lai Cách, Bến Đầu, Yên Trách, Trung Trinh and Trường Dục). To explain why only seven are accepted, either Bến Đầu is excluded as it was a temporary granary, or the number refers to the seven counties involved (Phú Vang, Hương Trà, Hải Lăng, Minh Linh, Vũ Xương (Bến Đầu), Lệ Thủy and Khang Lộc).

the ship or boat. If the width was 11 *thước* [4.4 metres], then 11 *quan* of money had to be paid. Nine *quan* was paid for a boat nine *thước* [3.6 metres] wide, and four *quan* for a boat four *thước* [1.6 metres] wide.

These ships were [also] supposed to take turns transporting rice to Thuận Hóa. If a ship was doing this, then not only was the tax waived for the trip, but also the person could claim 15 *quan*, or ten *quan* if the ship was new, for *kiên trì* [ship repairs]. In addition, there was the ritual of *cầu gió* [praying for good winds] on which ten *quan* were spent. These expenses were funded from the transportation fees that people paid. Each ship's turn came every two or three months.

In 1768 there were 40 ships in the prefecture of Triệu Phong, ten in the county of Quảng Bình, ten in the county of Nam Bố Chính, 60 in Quảng Nam, 93 in Quy Nhơn, 44 in Phú Xuân [Huế], 32 in Diên Khánh, 45 in Bình Thuận and seven in Gia Định. In addition Bình Thuận provided 63 ships for craftsmen, and seven ships for [each] army official who was in charge of the guards, 443 ships all together. [Revenue from] the transportation fees amounted to 2,639 *quan*. 57 ships were used for transportation; the government paid out 795 *quan* of *kiên trì* money for ship repairs,[48] and ten *quan* for the ritual of *cầu gió*. After the money had been delivered for *kiên trì* and *cầu gió*, the remaining revenue from the transportation fees was paid to the army as salaries.

Copper (Vol. 6, p. 216b)

The Hội An market had many copper pots and trays brought by ships from overseas. Thousands and even tens of thousands of copper wares were brought here to be sold here during peacetime. Chinese traders used to buy here and then transport the copper wares to sell in Phố Thanh Hà [north of today's Huế, also known as Phố Lở]. This often allowed their returns to double their outlay.

Jade (Vol. 6, p. 222a)

A kind of jade called *ngọc hoàn chiếu*[49] was brought into Thuận Hóa by Dutch ships. Most of the jade was a green or white colour, very rarely light yellow or red. A big one could be as large as a grain of corn, and a small one resembled a mung bean. People used them to inlay rings or in their headgear. In the dark it was luminescent, and if you took a close look it appeared multicoloured, twinkling blue and red. It could not be burnt even in a fire. The price of a single

[48] Assuming that a claim for *kiên trì* was paid for every one of the 57 ships, we can calculate that 45 old ships were used (paid 15 *quan* each) and 12 new ships were used (paid 10 *quan* each) to bring the total to 795 *quan*.
[49] Possibly some fine siliceous stone, e.g. opal or amber.

piece of *ngọc hoàn chiếu* was 100 *lạng* [3.8 kilograms] of silver, more expensive than diamonds or jewels.

Cloth and Clothing (Vol. 6, pp. 223b-228a)

There was a settlement called Thải Vân [Rosy Clouds] southeast of Phú Xuân River [Hương Giang], between the three villages of Sơn Điền, Dương Xuân and Vạn Xuân. This settlement was divided into three hamlets, and each hamlet consisted of ten households, each of which had fifteen weavers.

It was said that a remote ancestor of these families came from the prefecture of Thăng Hoa, Quảng Nam. He learnt weaving from the Chinese and the skill was passed on from generation to generation. They could weave coloured silk, gauze, damask silk, brocade and all kinds of beautiful silks.

Most of the silk tax from Quảng Nam was collected in the prefectures of Thăng Hoa and Điện Bàn. The prefecture of Phú Xuân also contributed because there was a team of weavers who paid 36 bolts and 13.3 *thước*[50] of silk taxes each year, or 219 *quan* of money.

Long Phượng village in Mộ Hoa county, Quảng Ngãi prefecture paid two bolts and 7.58 *thước* [i.e. 18 square metres in all] of silk in taxes, or 11.2 *quan* of money.

The prefecture of Thăng Hoa paid 1,545 bolts [12,607 square metres] of silk, and Điện Bàn paid 2,358 bolts [19,241 square metres]. The bolt recognized during the Nguyễn Hoàng [1525-1613] period as a unit of taxed silk was 1.7 *thước* wide and 30 *thước* long [i.e. 8.2 square metres].

Hoa Châu in Thăng Hoa paid 809 bolts [6,601 square metres] as taxes and 11 bolts [90 square metres] as gifts each year, placed inside 17 boxes. The silk taxes included the silk taxed by the government and the silk given to the officials of Hoa Châu.

In Thuận Hóa there were some ten artisans who wove silk yarn. Each of them had to pay four pieces of silk as taxes. One square of silk was [usually] worth nine *mạch*, but thick silk was worth six *mạch* and thin silk five *mạch*. In some years the government asked the artisans to pay money instead of silk.

Each new year's day the *tri bạ tầu* [main customs officer] had to present [a gift of] one bolt of red crepe, one bolt of 'white flower' damask silk[51] or ten *quan* of money. When the birthday of the Nguyễn ruler came, the official would have to present the same quantity of silk. As regards the *cai bạ tàu* [lesser customs

[50] i.e. 36 x 1.7 x 30 square *thước*, plus 1.7 x 13.3 square *thước*, or 293.8 square metres plus 3.6 square metres, or 297 square metres.
[51] Damask silk with white flowers woven inside the fabric and usually only visible from a distance.

officer], he needed to present a gift only on the Nguyễn ruler's birthday, consisting of one bolt of golden satin (or 17 *quan* of money), one bolt of red silk and one bolt of white silk.

In Quảng Nam there were some artisans who wove damask, and these had to pay 46 bolts [375 square metres] each year.

Thanh Hảo village of Mộ Hoa county, Quảng Ngãi province, paid 1,170 bolts [9,547 square metres] of white cotton cloth in taxes and soldier money [i.e. redemption of the villagers' obligation to serve in the army].

In Khang Lộc county everyone wove cotton except for the people in two villages. All the people in Bình Xã village and Võ Xã village in Lệ Thủy county lived by weaving silk. In 1744 the people from Nghệ An spread the prophecy: 'Come back to the capital after the eighth generation'. Nguyễn Phúc Khoát thought that he was the eighth generation from Nguyễn Hoàng, so the prophecy must be referring to himself. Accordingly he proclaimed himself king and ordered every official in the court to make new costumes and caps, taking the costumes and caps painted in the book of *Tam Tài Đồ Hội* [*San Cai Tu Hui* in Chinese] as a model. Military officials from the *chưởng dinh* [division commander][52] to *cai đội* [the commander of a *đội*, a unit of 220-500 soldiers], and civil officials from the *quản bộ* [ministers] to the Cham headman, had to make their own clothes according to the model. All the clothes had to be made of colourful satin. Higher officials were required to have a dragon and water design [*mang pao* in Chinese] woven on their clothes. The cap had to be decorated with gold and silver.

The Nguyễn ruler also ordered his people to change their clothes according to the Chinese style to mark the political change. But women's clothing changed to a style similar to men's, with a short [loose] shirt and narrow sleeves, something not seen in China. These Chinese-style clothes stayed [in use] for more than 30 years so that the people here forgot the Vietnamese style. Then in the spring of 1776 the Trịnh ruler set up the office of *Trấn Phủ Nha Môn* in Thuận Hóa and in July of that year he ordered people to change their clothes back to the Vietnamese style. No-one could be dressed in silk except for the officials. As for the beautiful brocades, dragons and phoenixes, in short all the fancy decorations, they were not to be used for clothing.

[52]Before 1774 there were twelve *dinh* (military divisions broadly corresponding to prefectures) under the control of the Nguyễn: Chính Dinh (capital), Cựu Dinh (old capital area), Quảng Bình Dinh, Võ Xã Dinh or Lũu Đồn Dinh, and Bố Chính Dinh in Thuận Hóa; Quảng Nam Dinh (including Quảng Ngãi and Quy Nhơn area); Phú Yên Dinh, Bình Khang Dinh and Bình Thuận Dinh (former Cham territory); Trấn Biên Dinh, Phan Trấn Dinh (Gia Định area) and Long Hồ Dinh (former territory of Cambodia).

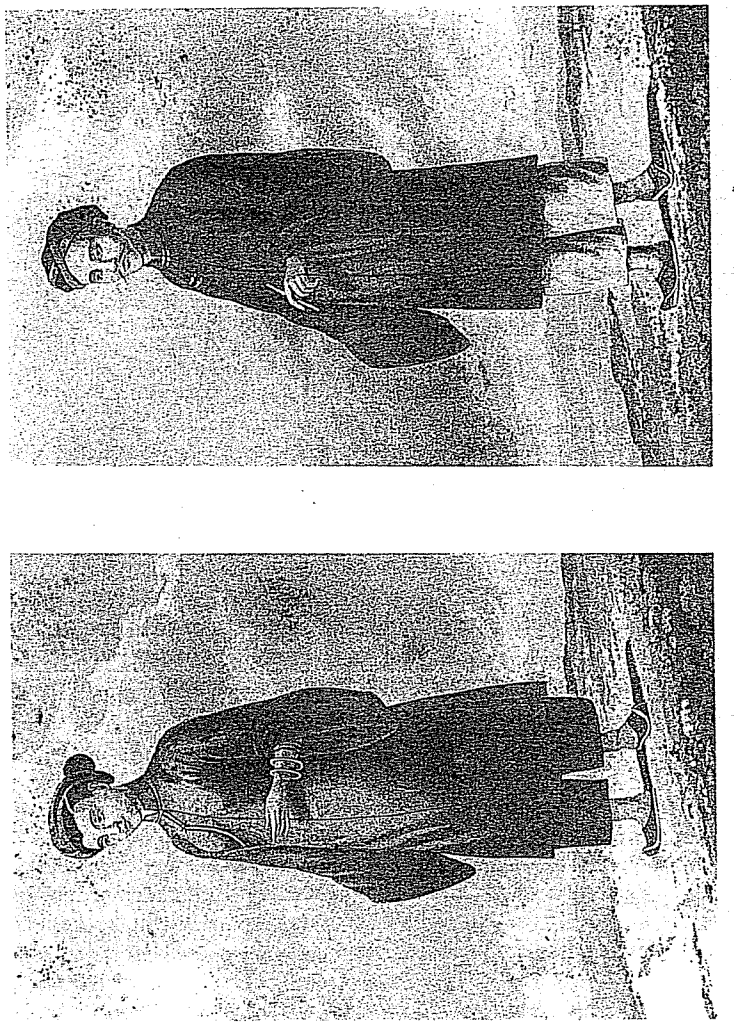


Figure 9. Cochinchinese Lady (left) and Cochinchinese Mandarin (right).
Original drawing by an anonymous Chinese in J. Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China*, London, 1828.

From then on everyone, no matter whether man or woman, had to have a shirt with a high collar and short sleeves. The sleeves could be wide or narrow as people wished, but definitely without pleats under the armpit. Men who wanted to wear shirts without collars were given permission to do so as these were more convenient to work in.

Because the people in Thuận Hóa lived in peace for a long time, both officials and the common people were wealthy and accustomed to fancy things. Their lifestyles tended to be even fancier during the Nguyễn Phúc Khoát period [1738-1765]. Because he himself liked luxury, his subjects all followed him and luxury became the norm for them. No matter how high or low their position, the officials all lived in ornamental buildings with gauze and satin as curtains and mosquito nets. Their pots were made of copper, their furniture of *trắc* [a kind of hardwood], their cups and trays of porcelain, and their saddles of gold and silver. Dresses were made of brocade and coloured silk, and mats of very good quality rattan. They showed off and competed with each other for richness and distinction.

The common people also wore satin shirts with flowers and damask trousers as their everyday garb. To be dressed in plain cotton was considered a disgrace.

The soldiers all enjoyed sitting on mats, with incense burners in their hands, receiving fine tea in silver or porcelain cups. Everything came from China, from spittoons to crockery, even the food. For every meal they had three big bowls of rice.

The women all dressed in gauze, ramie and silk, with embroidered flowers circling their round collars. People here looked upon gold and silver as sand, millet and rice as mud; their lives could not be more extravagant.

According to Nguyễn Công Bình, who used to be an official of the Nguyễn, there were three officials that Nguyễn Phúc Thuận [1765-1777] relied on. One was Trương Phúc Loan who was so greedy that he would never stop collecting money although he already had untold gold, silver and valuable things at home. The other two persons were the Nguyễn ruler's uncles: Nguyễn Noãn, in charge of the navy, a big drinker who was always drunk and knew nothing about life; and Nguyễn Nghiêm who was in charge of *Hữu Trung Cơ* [i.e. one of four high army officials in the Nguyễn army]. This man liked women; he kept 120 concubines, so women decorated with pearls and jade were all over his home.

The Riches of Quảng Nam (Vol. 6, pp. 229b-231b)

Trương Phúc Loan usurped authority for more than 30 years, [during which he] collected a lot of money and killed many people. The taxes collected in Sài Nguyên, Thu Bồn Nguyên, Trà Vàn Nguyên and Đồng Hương Nguyên were

given to him as his salary, as much as 40-50 thousand *quan* per year. Moreover, as the official in charge of transportation and civil affairs he received another 30 to 40 thousand *quan* each year.

Thuận Hóa had very few products. All the valuable things were taken from Quảng Nam which was the richest place in the world. The people in Thăng Hoa and Điện Bàn could weave, and the quality and beauty of the thin silk, satin, damask silk and gauze they produced were as good as those in Canton.

Abundant rice was produced in Quy Nhơn, Quảng Ngãi and Gia Định. Chinese traders used go there to buy rice, clicking their tongues as a sign of admiration.

There were as many elephants as oxen and horses in Kế Lảnh, Thu Bồn and Phường Tây in the Thăng Hoa and Điện Bàn prefectures. Every family there raised elephants, and the same was true of Quy Nhơn and Quảng Ngãi.

There were horses in Hạt Cô Điên and Hạt Kế Thu in Quy Nhơn. The horses were [wild] in the mountains; a herd could amount to hundreds or thousands. They stood 2.5 to 3 *thước* [1-1.2 metres] tall. The local people used to tame them and employ them to carry tradegoods to Phú Yên. It was very common to see women go shopping or travelling on horseback.

Land Pressure in Thuận Hóa, and the Colonization of the Mekong Delta (Vol. 6, pp. 242a-243b)

All the land in Bái Thiên district [*tổng*] and Mai Xã village belonged to the government. The rent for one *mẫu* [3,600 square metres] of land was 50-60 *quan* of lead money a year, which was equivalent to 17-20 *quan* of copper money.

If a peasant here had one bull, that would be enough for him to plough his land; if he had only cows, then he would have to use two cows for ploughing. The price of oxen was high: a big ox was 120 *quan* in lead coins in price, equalling 40 *quan* in copper coins; even a small one was 80 *quan*, which equalled 27 *quan* of copper coins. It was the same in every county, but the price of oxen was highest in Hương Trà county.

In the old days in Lệ Thủy and Khang Lộc counties, land could be rented at a cost of three to four *quan* for one *mẫu* [3,600 square metres] per harvest. When the lead coin came to be used, those who were better off would not let the poor people hire their land, even at a rent of 20 *quan* of lead coins, which equalled 6.3 *quan* of copper coins. The reason for this was because of the dense population living on the limited land here; on average there were only 5-6 *sào* [1,800-2,160 square metres, approximately 0.2 hectares] of land per person, barely enough for one to live on. That was why many people preferred to be soldiers rather than

peasants, because as a soldier they could get thirty percent more land than as a peasant.

There were thousands of *li*[53] of forest in the prefecture of Gia Định, whether one approached it from the port gates of Cần Giờ and Saigon, or from Cửa Đại and Cửa Tiểu. [The area] was acquired from the Cambodians after the Nguyễn ruler fought with them. Then the Nguyễn ruler began to recruit wealthy people from Quảng Nam, Điện Bàn, Quảng Ngãi and Quy Nhơn to move to the Gia Định area. They cut down the trees, cleared and levelled the land, and rendered it fertile for planting. The government let the people occupy the land freely, to plant betel nut trees and build their own houses.

The Nguyễn ruler also let those colonists gather *mọi* [hill] people from the highlands and sell them as slaves to the rich. These slaves married each other and produced more children to work and produce more rice.

The rich people in these places may be counted as many as 40-50 families, or [possibly only] 20-30 families. Some had 50-60 slaves and 300-400 oxen in a single family. They worked throughout the year. When November and December [lunar year] came, they milled the rice and sold it in the markets to make money for use in the [lunar] new year. But after the new year they did not have enough extra workers to work in the mills. They traded the rice in Phú Xuân with the Chinese for coloured silk, damask, clothes; in short, for all manner of beautiful things. They rarely used cotton and plain things.

There were many rivers in this region. Waterways were so numerous that they resembled a net over the land. But on the other hand it was not easy to travel on foot. So whenever traders arrived in large ships they brought some boats with them for access to the small ports.

[53] Thousands of 500 metre units, a poetic exaggeration.

9. THE NGUYỄN CHRONICLE TO 1777

ĐẠI NAM THỰC LỤC TIỀN BIÊN [VERITABLE RECORD OF ĐẠI NAM'S INITIAL PERIOD]

By Trương Đăng Què et al.

Excerpts translated by Li Tana

Although the Nguyễn ruled Southern Vietnam as an independent country during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they nonetheless claimed their legitimacy from the Lê emperor who lived in the north. Hence the title 'Nguyễn dynasty' is reserved for the Nguyễn royalty who ruled Vietnam after putting down the Tây Sơn rebellion in 1802. At the same time, the Nguyễn emperors traced their legitimacy to the earlier Nguyễn rulers who they understandably viewed as the initial period of Nguyễn Đại Nam (Vietnam). So when in 1811 the court literati *began to collect sources for an official chronicle of the Nguyễn dynasty,* ***Đại Nam Thực Luc*** *(Veritable Record of Đại Nam), they also compiled the* ***Đại Nam Thực Luc Tiền Biên*** *(Veritable Record of Đại Nam's Initial Period). The latter work records the important events which occurred between 1558 and 1777, beginning with Nguyễn Hoàng, the first Nguyễn ruler who went to Thuận Hóa, and ending with the death of the ninth Nguyễn ruler (Nguyễn Phúc Thuần) who died in 1777 during the Tây Sơn uprising. The work was finished in 1844 and produced in twelve volumes.*

When writing this book, the scholars of the Nguyễn period must have used ***Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*** *(see previous piece). Yet, because* ***Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*** *was written by an official from the Trịnh, who only occupied Thuận Hóa after 1774, its coverage of the Quảng Nam area is patchy. By contrast,* ***Đại Nam Thực Luc Tiền Biên*** *provides a chronological record of the whole period of the southern Nguyễn rulers, and hence the most important single overview of the south.*

The following extracts are translated from a modern edition of ***Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên****, photomechanically printed and published in 1961 by the Keio Institute of Linguistic Studies, Mita, Siba, Minato-ku, Tokyo.*

Southward Expansion

The following excerpts describe the expansion of the Nguyễn suzerainty southwards and some other related events.

(Vol. 3, pp. 51-52)

[In a war of 1648] the Nguyễn defeated the Trịnh and captured 30,000 of their soldiers. The ruler [Nguyễn Phúc Lan, r. 1635-1648] discussed with his subjects how to deal with the prisoners of war. Some said that these people were unreliable, and should be sent either into the high mountains or to the islands, in case they made trouble; others said that the high officials should be put to death, and the others allowed to go back to the north.

The ruler said 'South of Thăng Bình [Thăng Hoa] and Điện Bàn lies the old territory of the Champa where very few people live. If we put the captured soldiers on this land, give them oxen and farm implements, provide them with food to eat, and let them clear the land, then in several years they could produce enough for their own needs. After they marry and have children, in 20 years the children can be soldiers of the country. I foresee no trouble at all from them.'

Then the ruler let Generals Gia and Lý and about 60 of his officials and servants return to the north. The soldiers were divided into villages, 50 soldiers to each village, and given half a year's food supply. Further, the ruler ordered the better-off people to lend them food. The resettled people were free to seek a livelihood from the mountains and lakes. And so villages flourished from Thăng Hóa and Điện Bàn to Phú Yên and the families eventually became registered households.

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(Vol. 7, p. 104)

In July 1700 the government set the colours for those ships transporting rice from each and every district to the capital so that they were easy to distinguish. From Thăng Hoa — yellow; from Điện Bàn — blue; from Quảng Ngãi — red; from Quy Nhơn — top half red, bottom half white; from Phú Yên — top half white, bottom half black; from Bình Khang, Diên Ninh, Bình Thuận and Gia Định — top half blue, bottom half red.

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(Vol. 7, p. 106)

In 1702 a bandit gang at sea, whose head was An Lie[1], arrived at Đảo Côn Lôn [Pulo Condore] in eight *man* [barbarian] ships. An Lie and his four European men called themselves *ban* 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, since the Europeans used the word *ban* for headman. They led approximately 200 people in erecting a stockade and fences on the island. They had lots of valuable goods — so many that if put together, the goods could make a mountain. They positioned big cannons in all four directions to guard the island.

The *Trấn Thủ* [garrison chief] of Trấn Biên Dinh,[2] whose name was Trương Phúc Phan [father of Trương Phúc Loan and husband of the princess Ngọc Nhiên], reported the issue to the ruler [Nguyễn Phúc Chu, r. 1691-1725]. The ruler ordered Phúc Phan to work out a scheme to get rid of the gang.

In October 1703 An Lie's gang was routed. To start with, Trương Phúc Phan recruited 15 Javanese. He told them to pretend to submit to An Lie and then take the opportunity to kill him and his gang. The Javanese did this successfully without An Lie finding out in time.

Having lived on the island for more than one year without being bothered by the Nguyễn, An Lie and his men were very happy and thought that they could stay on the island in safety. But one night the Javanese set fire to the stockade. They killed *ban* 1 and *ban* 2 and arrested *ban* 5, while *ban* 3 and *ban* 4 escaped to sea.

As soon as the events were reported to Trương Phúc Phan, he sent some warships to Đảo Côn Lôn, collected all the goods and sent them to the ruler.

The ruler rewarded the Javanese, the officials and soldiers of the court richly. *Ban* 5 died on the way to court.

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(Vol. 8, p. 115)

In 1711 the ruler sent Thuận Đức, an official in the Tướng Thần Ty [Ministry of the Interior], to bring back the people who were drifting into Cambodia. . . . He ordered these people to settle down in the military divisions of Trấn Biên Dinh [Biên Hòa area] and Phan Trấn Dinh [Gia Định area]. He gave them land, let them set up villages, and exempted them for three years from taxes, corvée, rent

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[1]Allen Ketchpole, or Catchpoole, who had been appointed President of an East India Company factory at Chusan, an island off the Chinese port of Ningpo, in 1699. When this was blocked by Chinese opposition, Ketchpole settled on Đảo Côn Lôn as an alternative English commercial base in the region.

[2]The military division (*dinh*) of Trấn Biên, one of the twelve *dinh* into which the Nguyễn divided their realm.

and military duties. Thus these people lived and worked in peace and contentment.

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(Vol. 8, p. 116)

In 1712 the ruler sent a deputation to Cambodia with 100 *lạng* [3.8 kilograms] of gold to buy lac, because the lac there was excellent. The deputation also presented a letter to Nac Thu, the barbarian king of the Cambodians.

In September of that year, the barbarian king of Thuận Thành Trấn [Champa], Ke Ba Tu, asked the ruler to set up the government for his region. The ruler ordered his civil officials to establish five rules.

1. Any [Cham] official in Thuận Thành Trấn who wanted to lodge a complaint to the ruler had to pay for a [Vietnamese] official to carry out the investigation. If [the Cham] official had the grade of tả [left] *trà* or *hữu* [right] *trà*, then he had to pay 20 *mạch*; if he had the grade of *tả phan dung* or *hữu phan dung*, then he had to pay ten *mạch*.

If the Cham official wanted to lodge a complaint with the Bình Khang Dinh and was in the grade of *tả* or *hữu trà*, then he had to pay ten *mạch*; if he was in the grade of *tả* or *hữu phan dung*, then he only needed to pay two *mạch*.

2. When an argument arose between the Han people[3] and people of Thuận Thành [the Cham], the case must be adjudicated by both sides, the barbarian king on one side and the *cai bộ* [revenue collector] and *ký lục* [personnel officer] on the other. If the dispute arose among the Cham people, then it could be adjudicated by the barbarian king on his own.

3. The places called Jianjian and O Cam should be guarded by soldiers. The officials were not allowed to seize the common people there for carrying goods on the officials' behalf.

4. All the traders who wanted to trade in the barbarian area were required to go to the relevant offices in the area to get permission.

5. The people from Champa who had wandered around in Phan Trấn Dinh [Gia Định] were already now sent back. The king and the officials of Champa should take care of these people. Exploitation was not allowed.

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(Vol. 9, p. 129)

In 1731 the ruler organized 11 *thuyền* of soldiers to collect lac in Gia Định. Because the forests of the Gia Định area produced lac, the ruler ordered his officials to assemble 500 people to form 11 *thuyền* of soldiers. Every soldier had

[3]Here meaning Vietnamese.

to pay 16 *cân* [10 kilograms] of lac per year as tax, and the government collected 6,528 *cân* [4 tonnes] each year.

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In 1736 Mạc Thiên Tứ (the son of Mạc Cửu) was appointed as *Đô Đốc*[4] of Hà Tiên Trấn. The ruler presented him with three ships which had dragon plates.[5] The ships were exempt from tax in their mission of going to sea and buying treasures for the ruler. The ruler ordered Mạc to set up a mint for casting coins to be used in trade. So Mạc Thiên Tứ began to set up his mint, to assemble soldiers, to build a town and fortress, and to broaden the streets. This place [Hà Tiên] became crowded with traders from everywhere.

Agricultural Records

The following excerpts from *Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiên Biên* record natural disasters, harvests and the prices of rice.

(Vol. 1, p. 21)

August 1559 [one year after Nguyễn Hoàng went to Thuận Hóa]: major flooding in Thanh Hóa and Nghệ An provinces [in North Vietnam] and many people there fled to the Thuận Hóa area.

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(Vol. 1, p. 24)

1565: there had been good harvests for several years and everyone was rich. In the meantime, because the war [with the Mạc in Hanoi] had gone on for years, the Lê emperor [Lê Anh Tôn, r. 1556-1572] was short of both rice and money. The ruler [Nguyễn Hoàng, r. 1558-1613] ordered his officials to collect taxes from the people in Thuận Hóa to give to the emperor in Tây Đô [the west capital, in Thanh Hóa province]. Accordingly the emperor of Lê relied on the ruler.

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(Vol. 1, p. 28)

1608: very good harvests this year, and the price of 1 *đấu* [1 litre] was only 3 cash. In the same year there was a severe drought in the north of Nghệ An province. This made rice expensive, so many people from there went to the Thuận Hóa area.

[4]A high military position, even though Mạc was a civilian.

[5]Wooden plates bearing the imperial image of the dragon.

(Vol. 3, p. 46)

1637: famine during summer in the Thuận Hóa area.

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(Vol. 3, p. 47)

1641: drought struck in May, the crops all failed to ripen, and the price for 1 *đấu* [1 litre] of rice rose to 60 cash. Many people died.

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(Vol. 5, p. 72)

1667: a plague of locusts in October. The ruler ordered the people to build an altar to pray to heaven; then the locusts all went out to sea and died. Therefore it was a good harvest this year.

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(Vol. 5, p. 81)

1677: a bumper harvest, and 3 cash could buy 1 *đấu* [1 litre] of rice.

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(Vol. 7, p. 109)

1705: a plague of locusts in August. No harvest this year, and 1 *hộc* [5 litres][6] of rice cost 1.5 *quan* [i.e. 180 cash per litre of rice].

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(Vol. 10, p. 143)

1752: famine. The price of 1 *phương* [30 litres] of rice was more than 3 *quan* [i.e. over 60 cash per litre of rice], and many people died of starvation.

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(Vol. 11, p. 161)

1774: a major famine struck Thuận Hóa in October. 1 *cáp* [0.05 litres] [of rice] cost 0.1 *quan* [i.e. 1 litre cost 2 *quan*]. Bodies of people who had died of starvation were found on the roads. In some families people even ate their own family members.[7]

[6]i.e. presumably the *hộc* of the decimal system.

[7]This calamitous famine was apparently caused by the Tây Sơn rebellion.

Taxation Records

The following records refer to the development of the Nguyễn taxation system.

(Vol. 5, p. 74)

In 1669 the ruler [Nguyễn Phúc Tần, r. 1648-1687] ordered his subject Hồ Quang Đại to measure the land and set the tax rates. The land was divided into three grades, with a fourth category for exhausted and dry land. Each grade was taxed differently. Government land could be rented to the people. If someone had opened up some land by himself, then he could own this land but had to pay a different tax. As more land was cleared, so government offices were established to collect the taxes. These taxes were as follows:

for every *mẫu* [3,600 square metres] of grade 1 land, 40 *thăng* [20 litres] of unhusked rice, 8 *cáp* [0.4 litres] of husked rice;

for every *mẫu* of grade 2 land, 30 *thăng* [15 litres] of unhusked rice, 6 *cáp* [0.3 litres] of husked rice;

for every *mẫu* of grade 3 land, 20 *thăng* [10 litres] of unhusked rice, 4 *cáp* [0.2 litres] of husked rice.

Exhausted land and dry land were not divided into grades. For every *mẫu* people had to pay 300 cash, and for land less than one *mẫu* they paid 100 cash.

The taxes collected from the *quan đồn điền*,[8] *quan điền trang*[9], land newly cleared by individuals, and very fertile land, were used as salaries for the officials.

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(Vol. 11, p. 154)

1768: The record of annual income was established. Because people had enjoyed peace for a long time, land was much more developed than before, taxes therefore increased, and the storehouses were all full with rice and money. Since the ruler [Nguyễn Phúc Thuần, r. 1765-1777] had just succeeded to the throne, he wanted to know the total amount of income, so he ordered all the taxation offices to compile the taxation records and keep him informed.

	Thuận Hóa	Quảng Nam to Gia Định
Prefectures	2	9
Counties	9	26
Land (*mẫu*)	153,180	270,000[10]
Taxpayers (*đinh*)	12,685	16,506

[8]Government land, using soldiers as labourers. In ancient China, grain produced on such land was used to feed the army.

[9]Government land, but using peasants as labourers.

[10]76,590 and 135,000 hectares respectively.

	Thuận Hóa	Quảng Nam to Gia Định
Unhusked rice (*thăng*)	3,533,356	6,048,500[11]
Husked rice (*thăng*)	63,655	782,000[12]
Money (*quan*)	(no figures)	241,900

Other taxes from ponds, ferry crossings, markets, etc., were 76,460 *quan* of money, 148 *lạng* [5.6 kilograms] of gold and 1,450 *lạng* [54.8 kilograms] of silver.

Of these taxes, Quảng Nam provided six tenths, and Thuận Hóa four tenths.

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(Vol. 12, p. 171)

1777: After coming into Thuận Hóa, the Trịnh ruler (Trịnh Sâm, r. 1739-1782) ordered Phạm Ngô Cầu, one of his officials, to reset the taxation scale in Thuận Hóa so as to reduce rents and taxes. The tax exemption for military duty was also reduced by 20 per cent and the number of troops in the army was reduced by a third.

[11] 1,766.7 and 3,024.3 kilolitres respectively.
[12] 31.9 and 391.0 kilolitres respectively.

10. EXCHANGE RATES AND COMMODITY PRICES

David Bulbeck and Kristine Alilunas-Rodgers

As detailed in the Index, information on exchange rates and the prices of certain commodities are scattered throughout the pieces translated in this book. These data are here tabulated along with some further information. For background on the conversion rates used for the various units of quantity, e.g. the interpretation of a 'Cochinchinese *pikul*' of rice or sugar, the reader should consult the glossaries which follow. The following sources are used to compile the tables given below.

'Letter by Jeronimus Wonderaer from Hội An, 1602', Piece 1 of this book. Here referred to as 'Wonderaer'.

Trương Đăng Quế et al. *Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên*, Tokyo, 1961; Piece 9 of this book. It gives some rice prices between 1608 and 1774.

Christophoro Borri, *Cochin-china*, London, 1633. An account by an Italian priest who lived in Cochinchina between 1618 and 1623, translated into English by Robert Ashley.

W.J.M. Buch, *De Oost-Indische Compagnie en Quinam. De betrekkingen der Nederlanders met Annam in de XVII^e eeuw*, Amsterdam, 1929. It cites some values from the 1630s when the Dutch East India Company traded freely in Cochinchina.

M. Faure, 'V. Extrait d'un in-quarto portant pour titre: Lettres edifiantes et curieuses sur la visite apostolique de M. de la Baume, évêque d'Halicarnasse à la Cochinchine en l'année 1740, par M. Faure, prêtre suisse, etc. A Venise. 1746'. *Revue de l'Extrême-Orient*, vol. 2, 1884, pp. 346-52. Here referred to as 'Faure's Letters'.

Pierre Poivre, '1744. Mémoire sur la Cochinchine', *Revue de l'Extrême-Orient*, vol. 2, 1884, pp. 324-37. Here referred to as 'Poivre's Report'.

Anonymous, 'Voyage de Pierre Poivre en Cochinchine. Description de la Cochinchine (1749-1750)', Piece 7 of this book. Here referred to as 'Description'.

Pierre Poivre, 'Voyage de Pierre Poivre en Cochinchine. (Suite). Journal d'un voyage à la Cochinchine depuis le 29 aoust 1749, jour de notre arrivée, jusqu'au 11 février 1750', *Revue de l'Extrême-Orient*, vol. 3, 1885, pp. 364-510. Here referred to as 'Poivre's Journal'.

A. Dalrymple, *Oriental Repertory*, London, 1808. It includes some observations by Robert Kirsop who visited Cochinchina in 1750.

Lê Quý Đôn, *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*, Saigon, 1973; Piece 8 of this book. A most valuable source for the 1770s.

Exchange Rates

An article by John Whitmore[1] reviews the broad issues which faced the various Vietnamese regimes in organizing their currency. These included the traditional use of Chinese copper cash as currency in Vietnam, the Ming prohibition on copper exports, and the availability of masses of Japanese and American silver by the sixteenth century. As a result of the worsening shortage of cash (*quan*) from the fifteenth century onwards, copper gave way to lead, tutenag and, finally, silver as the chosen metal for minting during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Vietnam's position as a major node in the world flow of precious metals was another important factor, as was the local development of copper, silver and especially gold mining. Vietnam was very much a net importer of copper and silver but a net exporter of gold, and this was particularly true of the Nguyễn domain.

Although the monetary system was patently in a state of flux during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it may be reasonable to take prices in silver as the closest indication of the real value of an item. We say this because the main European currencies of the day employed silver standards, and silver eventually came to be preferred in Vietnam too. Moreover such an assumption would predict a gradual increase in the silver-value of the increasingly scarce copper *quan*, as borne out by the available data on exchange rates tabulated below. The value of gold, on the other hand, appears to have fluctuated more.

Buu Sao[2] calculates the following exchange rates in Tongking in 1740: 25.6 grams of silver for a *quan*, 2.3 grams of gold for a *quan*, and a gold-silver parity of 1:11.3. Whitmore (*op. cit.*, pp. 382, 387) cites an estimated gold-silver parity in Tongking of 1:10 in the 1630s and 1:9 in the mid-eighteenth century. These figures resemble those which can be calculated for Nguyễn Vietnam at about the same interval, with the differences attributable to local economic and political factors. The earliest information we have found on the parity of the Nguyễn *quan* to minted silver is the 1602 exchange rate given by Wonderaer of 2,500 to 3,000

[1]John K. Whitmore, 'Vietnam and the monetary flow of eastern Asia, thirteenth to eighteenth centuries', in J.F. Richards (ed.), *Precious Metals in the Later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds*, pp. 363-93, Durham (North Carolina), 1983.

[2]André Buu Sao, La sapèque vietnamienne. Une approche numismatique par l'histoire et la métrologie comparée, Paris, 1985, pp. 33-4.

cash for a (silver) *tael*, which works out at 7.5 to 9 grams of minted silver per *quan*. The earliest mention of the gold-silver parity gives it as usually 1:10, i.e. one *tael* of gold for 10 *tael* of silver, before 1633 (Buch 1929:29) when it became 1:12. By 1750, however, the value of a *quan* was given as 4 *livres* (20 grams of minted silver), and the value of a piastre as 1 *quan* 3 *mạch* (giving 1 *quan* a value of 19.6 grams of minted silver), as recently established by the king's edict ('Description', p. 109). At that time 10 *tael* of gold was worth 220 *quan*, which comes to a gold-silver parity of around 1:12; but as explained by the author, the price of gold had just risen by approximately 100 per cent owing to the counterfeit *quan* then widely in production.[3] Compiling these and other available data produces the following table.

Year	*Quan* silver-value	*Quan* gold-value	Gold-silver parity
1602-c.1630	7.5 to 9 grams	0.75 to 0.9 grams[a]	1:10
1630s	12 grams?[b]	1 gram[b]	1:12
'Before 1744'	16.6 to 19.1 grams[c]	2.5 to 3.8 grams[d]	1:4.4 to 1:7.6
1744	19.1 to 22.5 grams[e]	2.5 to 3.8 grams[d]	1:7.6 to 1:9
1750	19.6 to 20 grams	1.7 grams	1:11.5 to 1:11.8
1776	(c.25 grams)	2.1 grams[f]	(1:11.7)

[a]Calculated by assuming minimal change between 1602 and 1630.
[b]No direct data available, but these estimates have the virtue of varying from the early seventeenth century figures towards the early eighteenth century situation.
[c]Calculated from 'Poivre's Journal' (p. 333) that 15 piastres (i.e. 382.5 grams of silver) were melted down to make a *pain* (10 *tael*) of silver which for a long time had sold for 20 to 23 *quan*.
[d]Calculated from 'Poivre's Journal' (p. 333) that a *pain* (10 *tael*) of gold cost 100-150 *quan*, depending on the season.
[e]Calculated from 'Poivre's Journal' (p. 333) that 15 piastres (i.e. 382.5 grams of silver) were melted down to make a *pain* (10 *tael*) of silver which now sold for 17 to 20 *quan*.
[f]Calculated from Chen's statement that 1 *thoi* (10 *tael*) of gold cost 180 (copper) *quan* (*Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*, vol. 4, pp. 34b-35b; see page 116 of this book). As this figure suggests a slight increase in the value of copper *quan* since 1750, the bracketed figures represent reasonable estimates. Tutenag *quan*, then worth one third the value of copper *quan*, would have been worth around 8 grams of silver and 0.7 grams of gold by this stage.

[3]See also P. Manguin, *Les Nguyễn, Macau et le Portugal*, Paris, 1984, p. 30.

The figures suggest that between the early seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, the value of *quan* against silver had doubled while its value against gold had quadrupled, such that the gold-silver parity had dropped by as much as a half. The currency turbulence of the late 1740s had the apparent effect of restoring the old gold-silver parity and, being prevented by the king's edict from deflating the silver-value of *quan*, more or less halved the gold-value of *quan*.

Commodity Prices

Applying the above conversion rates to prices at the same period in *quan*, silver or gold currency, we can follow the prices of some of the major commodities and tradegoods, here arranged in approximate ascending order of cost.

Rice (60 *đấu*)

1770s usual price:	Gia Định	Phú Xuân
Quan	0.4	3.6
Silver-value (grams)	10	90
Gold-value (grams)	0.8	7.6

Figures from *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*, vol. 2, pp. 90a-90b and vol. 3, p. 105b. *Quan* converted using the 1776 conversion rates. Note the approximate ten-fold mark-up for rice transported from the Mekong delta to Phú Xuân.

Rice (60 *đấu*)	1608	1641	1677	1705	1752	1774
Quan	0.3	6	0.3	18	6	120
Silver-value (grams)	2-3	72	5-6	300-344	118-120	3,000
Gold-value (grams)	0.2-0.3	6	0.8-1.1	45-68	10	252

Figures from *Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền* Biên (see Piece 9). 1608 and 1677 were great years; 1641, 1705, 1752 and especially 1774 were disasters. This last figure, attributable to the Tây Sơn uprising, shows how dependent Central Vietnam had become on Mekong delta rice. Conversion rates to gold and silver 'before 1744' used for the 1677 and 1705 figures; other conversion rates self-explanatory.

Brown Sugar

(one *pikul* of 60 kilograms)	1636	1637	1750
Quan	0.8-1	1.5-1.6	1.3-1.7
Silver-value (grams)	10-12	18-19	25-34
Gold-value (grams)	0.8-1	1.5-1.6	2.2-2.9

1636: 8 to 10 *mạch* a *pikul* (Buch 1929:48), presumably brown sugar. 1637: 15 to 16 *mạch* a *pikul* of 'black sugar' (Buch 1929:60). 1750: 2 to 2.6 *quan* a sugar-*pikul* (Dalrymple 1808:246).

White Sugar

(one *pikul* of 60 kg)	1744	1750(i)	1750(ii)	1776
Quan	2.7	2.7-3.3	2-3.5	2-4
Silver-value (grams)	51-60	52-66	39-70	50-100
Gold-value (grams)	7-10	4.5-5.6	3.4-6	4-8

1744: 4 *quan* a 'Cochinchinese pic' ('Poivre's Journal', p. 329), here assumed to be white sugar. 1750(i): 4 *quan* a 'Cochinchinese pic' for white sugar, 5 *quan* a 'Cochinchinese pic' for crystal sugar ('Description'). 1750 (ii): 3 *quan* for middling quality of white, 3.5 to 4 *quan* for fine white, 4.5-5.2 *quan* for sugar candy, all in sugar-*pikul* (Dalrymple 1808:36). 1776: 2 *quan* a *pikul* for white sugar, 4 *quan* a *pikul* for crystal sugar (*Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*, vol. 4, pp. 34b-35b).

Sappanwood (one *pikul*)	1750	1774
Quan	1-1.2	6
Silver-value (grams)	20-24	150
Gold-value (grams)	1.7-2	12.6

1750: 'Poivre's Journal, pp. 390, 428. 1774: *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục* vol. 4, pp. 34b-35b. The price increase appears so steep that presumably different grades might have been involved.

Pepper (one *pikul*)	1602	1744	1750	1776
Quan	21-25	10-12	15-16	20
Silver-value (grams)	189	191-270	294-320	500
Gold-value (grams)	18.9	25-46	26-27	42

1602: Five *tael* a *pikul* ('Wonderaer'). 1744: 10 to 12 *quan* a *tael* the 'usual' (i.e. old) price of pepper ('Poivre's Journal', p. 421). 1750: 15 to 16 *quan* a *pikul* ('Description'). 1776: 20 *quan* a *pikul* (*Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*, vol. 4, pp. 34b-35b).

Brass (one *pikul*)	1633	1744
Quan	31.5-63	40
Silver-value (grams)	378-756	764-900
Gold-value (grams)	31.5-63	100-152

1633: 100-110 *tael* a *pikul* before the Japanese ships come in, 200 after they come in (Buch 1929:30). 1744: minimum price in *quan* ('Poivre's Report', p. 336).

Silk (one *pikul*)	1633	1744	1748	1750
Quan	315-504	200	113-134	106-254
Silver-value (grams)	3,780-6,048	3,820-4,500	2,550	2,350-5,080
Gold-value (grams)	315-504	500-760	283-336	180-432

1633: 100-110 *tael* a *pikul* for old silk, 150-160 *tael* a *pikul* for new silk (Buch 1929:29). 1744: 200 *quan* a *pikul* of raw silk ('Poivre's Report', p. 329). 1748: 150 piastres for a *pikul* of 100 'Cochinchinese livres' ('Poivre's Report', p. 374). Resulting figures not necessarily reliable as Poivre appears to guess that the enlarged rather than the usual *pikul* is involved. Conversions to *quan* and to gold-value follow 1744 figures. 1750: 'in season' price is given as 40 cash a *tael* or as 4.8 *livres* a *kati* ('Description'), i.e. 106 *quan* or 2,350 grams of silver a *pikul*. 'Usual' price is given as 8 to 9 *mạch* for 10 *tael*, i.e. 127-143 *quan* of gold a *pikul*; this year's price, very high, given as 1.3 to 1.6 *quan* for 10 *tael*, i.e. 206-254 *quan* a *pikul* ('Poivre's Journal', p. 453).

Calambac (one *pikul*)	1600	1618	1740	1750	1774
Thousands of *quan*	7-8	8.5-11	15.8-24	6-8	12
Silver-value (kilograms)	60	64-99	264-456	118-160	300
Gold-value (kilograms)	6	6.4-9.9	60	10.2-13.6	25.2

1600: Borri's statement (1633: 336) that calambac was then worth its weight in silver. 1618: Borri's statement (1633: 336) that one 'pound' of calembac cost 15 (presumably gold) ducats, i.e. 52.5 grams of minted gold. From the context if is not clear whether an Italian pound (318 grams), English pound (454 grams) or Dutch *pond* (494 grams) was intended. 1740: sold by gold weight in the province of Champa ('Faure's Letters', p. 347); an anomalously high price, presumably because it refers to contraband calambac. 1750: 'best grade' 60 to 80 *quan* a *kati* ('Description', p. 114). 1774: *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*, vol. 4, pp. 34b-35b.

When expressed in terms of their silver-value, rice, brown sugar, calambac, pepper and brass seem to have become gradually more expensive over time. White sugar and silk, on the other hand, seem to have stayed at about the same price, with most of the variability in prices attributable to quality and seasonal fluctuations. Note that using prices in copper *quan* would lead to quite different conclusions — e.g. that silk became cheaper, pepper stayed the same and non-contraband calambac became only slightly more expensive — but as explained above, copper *quan* themselves became valuable during the period.

GLOSSARY OF GENERAL TERMS

Weights

tael — The trade term for the Chinese 'ounce' or *liang*, widely used for gold, silver and other precious materials, and equivalent to 37.8 grams.

kati (Malay) — The Malay term (cf. trade term: catty) for the Chinese 'pound' or *chin*, weighing around 600 grams and expressed either as 16 *tael* (*liang*) or as one hundredth of a *pikul*.

pikul (Malay) — The Malay term for the Chinese *tan*, indicating the quantity a porter could shoulder and carry. The precise measure varied chronologically and geographically, and is here rounded off to 60 kilograms per *pikul*.

pond, lb. (Dutch) — 494 grams.

livre (French) — Around 500 grams as used by Poivre whose 'Journal' (p. 390) reckoned a *pikul* as 123 *livres*. Revolutionary France standardized the *livre* at exactly 500 grams by decree in 1789.

once (French) — One sixteenth of a *livre*; around 31 grams as used by Poivre.

Distances

li (Chinese) — 500 metres.

voet(h) (Dutch) — 28.3 centimetres.

vadem (Dutch) — 1.8 metres.

mijl (Dutch) — 5.5 kilometres.

pouce (French) — 2.7 centimetres.

pied (French) — 12 *pouces*, i.e. 32.5 centimetres.

lieue (French) — 4 kilometres.

Currencies

tael — The trade name for the Chinese *liang* (ounce), also used as a trade currency term with a value of 37.8 grams of minted silver.

piastre, real or 'piece of eight' — Spanish silver coin then weighing about 27 grams at about 95 per cent purity (Gaastra 1983: 468), i.e. a rounded-off value of 25.5 grams of minted silver.

guilder — Dutch silver coin, weighing 10.28 grams in the period 1620-59 (Gaastra 1983: 470).

livre — French monetary unit preceding the modern franc which was introduced in 1799. From 1726 onwards, i.e. the period of relevance to this book, the *livre* had the value of 4.9 grams of silver (Gadoury and Droulers 1978: 515).[1]

sou (sol) — French coin worth one twentieth of a *livre* (0.25 grams of silver).

denier — French coin worth one twelfth of a *sou* (0.02 grams of silver).

ducat — Dutch gold coin weighing 3.51 grams at 98.6 per cent purity (Gaastra 1983: 468), i.e. 3.5 grams of minted gold.

Other Terms

aldea — Village. From Spanish *aldea*, also *aldeia* in Portuguese, from the Arabic *al-day'a* (farm, village).

calambac — The resinous heart of the eaglewood.

cangue (French) — Portable stocks in which a person's neck and wrists are held. From Vietnamese *gông*?

eaglewood — The aromatic wood called aloe wood. Variants, depending on grade, include agalloch, agalwood, agula and aguila.

pain (French) — Also *barre*, the term used by Poivre for a bar (Vietnamese *nén*) of silver or gold.

somme (French) — Junk. From Portuguese *soma*, from Malay *som*.

tutenag — Properly zinc (spelter). Considered to be a base metal by the Chinese who called it 'poor', 'inferior', 'mean' or 'white' lead, in opposition to lead itself which they called 'black lead'. The term was also used to designate 'white copper' or 'paktong'.

white copper — Cupro-nickel, nickel-brass or 'paktong', an alloy of copper, zinc and nickel.

[1] Hence an exchange rate of 81 livres to 80 francs when the franc, which weighed 5 grams of silver, was introduced in 1799.

GLOSSARY OF VIETNAMESE TERMS

Grain Capacity

The following five passages from *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục* illustrate the Nguyễn system for measuring grain.

1. (Vol. 2, pp. 90a-90b)
[In the Mekong delta] 1 *mạch* can buy 16 *đấu* of rice which equals 30 official copper *bát*, and so with 1 *quan* of copper coins 300 *bát* of rice can be obtained.

2. (Vol. 3, p. 92b)
The tax rule in Thuận Hóa and Quảng Nam was as follows: 40 *thăng* (which equal 40 official copper *bát*) of rice for the grade 1 fields.

3. (Vol. 3, p. 93b)
The measures in Thuận Hóa were as follows: 10 *toát* equalled 1 *thược*, 10 *thược* equalled 1 *cáp*, 10 *cáp* equalled 1 *thăng*, 10 *thăng* equalled 1 *hộc*, and 10 *hộc* equalled 1 *thùng*.

When the officials collected the taxes, every *hộc* was 50 *thăng*, plus 25 *thăng*, so that made 75 *thăng* for one *hộc*, and 1 *thùng* was 500 *thăng*.[1] When they distributed rice to their soldiers, 1 *hộc* was 33.5 *thăng*. When rice was sent out for the *Nội Phủ* [storage in the government granaries], the *hộc* was 3 *thăng* less than that given to the soldiers, and the *thăng* of *Nội Phủ* was also [commensurately] smaller. In trade the common people used the *đấu* more often, and its size often varied as well.

4. (Vol. 3, p. 96b)
As regards the rice tax collected from the *quan điền trang* [government land cultivated by peasants] in Thuận Hóa, 25 *thăng* equal 1 *hộc*.

5. (Vol. 3, p. 105b)
In the old days the traders in Đồng Nai used to transport rice and sell it in Phú Xuân. The price was only 3 *mạch* for 10 *thăng* which equals one *hộc*, enough for one person's food for one month.

The most significant passage is the third one which states three main points. Firstly, Nguyễn Vietnam was officially using the decimal system which,

[1] i.e. in this particular variant of the system, there were apparently six and two thirds *hộc* to a *thùng*.

originally developed in China before the Song dynasty, had by now fallen into disuse in China and apparently in Tongking as well. Secondly, the *hộc* had a very different meaning depending on the context in which it was used, but its capacity in general trade was 10 *thăng* (see also the fourth and fifth passages). Thirdly, the unit of capacity used in the general rice trade was the *đấu*, which is part of the better known system for rice capacities listed, for instance, by Lê Thành Khôi.[2] The first and second passages translated above calibrate the official Nguyễn system with the system in general use.

Popular measures (from Lê Thành Khôi 1981):

bát	5 *le* (0.5 litres).
đấu	2 *bát* (1 litre).
thùng	20 *đấu* (20 litres).
phương	30 *đấu* (30 litres).

Official measures — usual meaning:

toát	0.5 millilitres.
thược	10 *toát* (5 millilitres).
cáp	10 *thược* (50 millilitres).
thăng	10 *cáp*, equals 1 *bát* (0.5 litres).
hộc	10 *thăng* (5 litres).
thùng	10 *hộc* (50 litres).

Official measures — special meanings of *hộc:*
25 *thăng* (12.5 litres) for rice tax from government lands cultivated by peasants;
30.5 *thăng* (15.3 litres) for government rice stored in the granaries;
33.5 *thăng* (16.8 litres) for rice given as rations to soldiers;
75 *thăng* (37.5 litres) for rice collected as general lands tax.

Weight

Manguin (1984:82, 122) mentions that the Nguyễn *pikul* used for weighing sugar equalled 150 Chinese *kati* or 1.5 *pikul*, i.e. 90 kilograms. At least two primary references establish the point. Discussing sugar, Poivre's 'Journal' (p. 492) mentions a 'Cochinchinese pic' which is reckoned as equivalent to 150 *kati* (i.e. *kati* of 600 grams). And Robert Kirsop, who visited Cochinchina in 1750, states that sugar was sold in *pikul* of 150 Chinese *kati* (Dalrymple 1808:246).

However, a further reference suggests that this enlarged *pikul* was also used for rice. Poivre's 'Report' (p. 334) mentions a Cochinchinese 'livre', used for rice,

[2] Lê Thành Khôi, 'Tableau des poids, mesures et monnaies', *Histoire du Viêt Nam des origines à 1858*, Paris, 1981, pp. 403-4.

equalling 1 French *livre* 14 *onces*, and 10 *onces* heavier than the Chinese 'livre'. Since the French *once* was approximately 30 grams, we calculate this Cochinchinese 'livre' as around 900 grams, which is indeed 10 *once* than the Chinese 'livre' (*kati*) of 600 grams. Making the reasonable assumption that there were 100 of these Cochinchinese 'livres' to a 'Cochinchinese pic', we again arrive at the figure of 90 kilograms for the Nguyễn *pikul*.[3] To explain why only rice and sugar are mentioned as having been weighed by this scale, it might be suggested that the Vietnamese vendors were using a capacity measure which the European traders interpreted as a weight measure. As noted above, the common unit at least for rice was the *đấu*, which at around one litre would amount to around 900 grams (one Cochinchinese 'livre') of rice or sugar.

That measure for granular products excluded, the recognised measures match Chinese equivalents.

lạng (tael)	37.8 grams, cf. Chinese *liang*.
cân	16 *lạng* (600 grams), cf. Chinese *jin*.
tạ	100 *cân* (60 kilograms), cf. Chinese *tan*.
nén (thoi)	10 *tael* or *liang* (378 grams), used specifically for standard ingots of silver and gold.

Length

thước	0.4 metres.
tam	8 *thước* (3.2 metres).
li	500 metres.

Area

An issue of 'Vietnamese Studies' explains that Bắc Bộ (North Vietnam) and Trung Bộ (Central Vietnam) understood the *mẫu* quite differently.[4] In Bắc Bộ the *mẫu* equalled 3,600 square metres and was part of the system including *sào* and *thược* which is listed by, for instance, by Lê Thành Khôi (*op. cit.*). In Trung Bộ, however, the *mẫu* equalled 5,000 square metres. Despite the lack of a specific reference on when this distinction first arose, it is reasonable to assume that it was in place before the Nguyễn dynasty united Vietnam in the early nineteenth century.

[3]Lack of recognition (e.g. by Manguin 1984) that the enlarged *pikul* also applied to rice probably reflects the lack of attention which European traders generally gave to rice. For instance, Kirsop explicitly stated that all Vietnamese products other than sugar were weighed in standard Chinese *pikul*, but then he did not specifically discuss prices of rice or its system of measurement.

[4]'Glossary', *The Traditional Village (I)*, Vietnamese Studies 61, Hanoi, 1980, p. 252.

The distinction raises the question of how to interpret the *mẫu* as it appears in *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục* and *Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên*. In the case of the former text, the most parsimonious interpretation would follow the North Vietnamese system, firstly because Lê Quý Đôn was writing for a North Vietnamese audience, and secondly because the passages translated here include *sào* and *thược*. By the same token the most parsimonious interpretation for the latter text would follow the Central Vietnamese system: it was compiled for the Nguyễn court; and *mẫu* alone are cited, at least for the passages translated here.

thược	24 square metres, *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*.
sào	15 *thược* (360 square metres), *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*.
mẫu	10 *sào* (3,600 square metres), *Phủ Biên Tạp Lục*.
mẫu	5,000 square metres, *Đại Nam Thực Lục Tiền Biên*.

Time

canh	2 hours 24 minutes.

Currency

đồng	1 cash.
mạch (tiên)	60 cash.
quan	10 *mạch* (600 cash).

General Terms

ăn mừng và hát xướng	Feasts.
cai bạ tầu	Lesser customs officer.
cai bộ	Revenue collector.
cai đội	Army officer commanding a unit of 220-500 men.
cầu hoa	Ritual which prays for good harvests.
cầu gió	Ritual which prays for good winds.
chưởng dinh	Commanders of the twelve military divisions.
cơm	Rice.
công phác	Commission.
công thuế	Official tax.
dinh	Military division (twelve in Nguyễn Vietnam).
đinh	Men aged between 20 and 60; taxpayers.
Đô Đốc	A high military position.
đội	A unit of the army consisting of three to five *thuyền*, usually 220-500 soldiers.

gạo lễ hầu trưng	Supplementary tax in rice paid by officials to the Nguyễn ruler.
huấn đạo	Chief official at a county (see *tri huyện*).
hiệp trấn phủ	Assistant officer.
kiền-kiền	*Phoebe nanmu.*
kiên trì	Ship repairs.
ký lục	Personnel officer.
lá buông	A kind of leaf used for weaving conical hats.
man	Barbarian.
Mọi	Hill people.
mở núi	The rite for cleansing the mountains.
mướng	Village.
nén	Bar of gold or silver weighing 10 *tael* (see also *thoi*).
ngọc hoàn chiếu	A kind of precious stone.
ngụ lộc	Officials' salary.
nguyên	Small regions where minority people lived.
nước mắm	Fish sauce.
phan dung	A grade for Cham officials, divided into *tả* (left) *phan dung* and *hữu* (right) *phan dung* posts.
phủ	Prefecture.
phường	Hamlet.
quản bộ	Ministers.
quan điền trang	Government land which uses peasants as labourers.
quan đồn điền	Government land which uses soldiers as labourers.
rượu nếp	Sticky-rice alcohol.
thổ nghi	Tax for itinerant/specialist traders.
thoi	Bar of gold or silver weighing 10 *tael* (see also *nén*).
thuế dung	Corvée labour.
thuyền	The smallest unit of the Nguyễn army, with 30 to 100 soldiers.
tiền lễ hầu phu	Supplementary tax in cash paid by officials to the Nguyễn ruler.
tổng	District.
trắc	A kind of hardwood.
Trấn Phủ Nha Môn	An office combining the rôles of garrison and mediator established in Huế by the Trịnh.
trấn thủ	Garrison chief..
tri bạ tầu	Main customs officer.

tri huyện	Chief official at a county (see *huấn đạo*).
tri phủ	Chief official of the prefecture.
tướng thần	Village tax collector.
Tướng Thần Ty	Ministry of the Interior.
xã	Village.
xã trưởng	Village head.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF NGUYEN RULERS

Ruler's Name	Popular Title	Reign
1. Nguyễn Hoàng	Chúa Tiên (Đoan Quận Công)	1558-1613
2. Nguyễn Phúc Nguyên	Chúa Sãi	1613-1635
3. Nguyễn Phúc Lan	Chúa Thượng	1635-1648
4. Nguyễn Phúc Tần	Chúa Hiền	1648-1687
5. Nguyễn Phúc Trăn	Chúa Nghĩa	1687-1691
6. Nguyễn Phúc Chu	Minh Vương	1691-1725
7. Nguyễn Phúc Trú	Ninh Vương	1725-1738
8. Nguyễn Phúc Khoát	Võ Vương	1738-1765
9. Nguyễn Phúc Thuần	Định Vương	1765-1777

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