

over the centuries, leaves us with few clues to the goods themselves. The one exception is the ceramics that poured out of north Viet Nam principally in the fifteenth century.

The recent excavation of a shipwreck off the island of Cu Lao Cham elucidates the nature of trade in the region. The shipwreck contained a cargo of over 200,000 pieces of late-fifteenth-century blue-and-white underglaze and monochrome ceramics (cat. no. 86 a–o, and fig. 10) produced in the Hong River delta. If these ceramics had been the only cargo aboard, we might surmise the ship had pulled into Cu Lao Cham's harbor merely to board supplies and water, but the presence of Cham storage jars suggests that, in addition to the blue-and-white pieces, local products stored in the jars were included, or alternately, that the jars contained the supplies that they boarded. One type of Cham jar (fig. 11) found on board the Cu Lao Cham shipwreck is identical to jars that have been found in Japan, and that were used in *chanoyu* (tea ceremony).

Ships coming to shore were steered toward an offshore island where locals offered supplies and services; after receiving clearance, the ship was then brought into the harbor and boarded by customs agents.⁷¹ The revenues they claimed were handed directly to the Nguyen, who relied on them for their political survival.⁷² The Nguyen monopolized "all of the most valuable commodities," in particular the gold being panned in the Truong Son mountain range.⁷³ Trade continued to be as crucial for their political success as it had been for the polities of Fu Nan and Champa. By the eighteenth century, foreign trade was less important than interregional trade, but it was not this shift in the trading pattern that brought an end to Hoi An. The Tay Son Rebellion and the city's destruction in 1775 was the first step, while the silting of the river and the increased size of merchant ships further contributed to its demise, leading to the increased importance of Da Nang as a port.⁷⁴ Today Da Nang continues to be an important port in central Viet Nam.