

kilometers away from the present seacoast. The whole area of Go O Chua—which means “pagoda hill”—covers about 65,000 square meters. The distribution of finds indicates that at least 40,000 square meters contain pedestals. Following a rough estimate on the basis of the so-far excavated area of 230 square meters, this site could include ten to twenty million fragments from about two million pedestals. It seems that Go O Chua preserves evidence for the remains of some thousands of prehistoric salt-boiling kilns of the ninth to the second centuries B.C. (fig. 23).

It is a very commonly held opinion that, in the past, salt in Viet Nam or neighboring countries was produced in evaporation fields, just as in modern times. On the contrary, early written records up to end of the thirteenth century in Cambodia and Viet Nam prove clearly that until the nineteenth century, the “white gold” was mainly obtained by boiling seawater, although the first salt fields in this region were constructed at the end of the seventeenth century in southern Viet Nam by Cantonese who fled from their home during the Manchu rule (fig. 24).

FIG. 23

Pedestal dump near the edge of the southern hillock of Go O Chua during excavation, January of 2006.



FIG. 24

Salt harvest along the coast near Nha Trang in Khanh Hoa Province.



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