

crosses northern Viet Nam with some rock crystal examples,<sup>51</sup> then goes to Lai Nghi in central Viet Nam and finishes in Tha Chana in southern Thailand with a carnelian bead of the same style.<sup>52</sup> From here farther into South Asia, the style changes from small sitting lion beads to mostly larger leaping tiger or lion pendants of a distinctly different style than those from Ban Don Ta Phet,<sup>53</sup> Khlong Thom, Khao Sam Kaeo<sup>54</sup> (all sites in Thailand), Halin, Beinnaka, or Myo Hla (all sites in Burma)<sup>55</sup> or from Pakistan.<sup>56</sup>

For the central Viet Nam-Hepu connection, we have to consider that the extraordinary complex of bronze vessel types from Lai Nghi—unique in all of central Viet Nam—were also found in the burials of Fengmenling and other Guangxi sites side-by-side with the lion beads. Their distribution near seacoast and traditional ports shows clearly how special items already moved over long distances along sea routes, up to the Western Han period.

Animal-shaped beads are rarely discovered in Viet Nam and may have had a greater meaning or importance than only as a variant of jewelry. It has been suggested that lion figures in Southeast Asia could be early Buddhist icons of Indian origin.<sup>57</sup> But in view of the large quantity of Southern Chinese lion beads and technical similarities of the Southern Chinese-Vietnamese group, at least a local influence in this area seems visible.

The single etched bead from Lai Nghi is the first to be discovered from the period B.C. in central Viet Nam (fig. 27). The manufacturing centers of etched bead-making were in South Asia, and apart from Thailand and Burma, etched beads are very rarely found on sites of this early period anywhere else in Southeast Asia. As a result, they are generally regarded as being “the clearest evidence for regular exchange between the emerging states of India and Southeast Asia.”<sup>58</sup>

To this evidence for early direct Indian contacts or influences we may add two sites in Quang Nam Province. There, sherds of an excellent quality of paste of the so-called rouletted ware have been found. Quang Nam Province is the terminus for flat dishes with eponymous decoration on the inside bottom and a characteristic “beaked” rim. Both sites, Go Cam and

FIG. 27

Bead offerings in a burial at Lai Nghi in Quang Nam Province. Among the beads made from carnelian, agate, nephrite, and glass is the first etched carnelian bead of the B.C. era to be found in central Viet Nam.

