

#### 14. BURIAL URN WITH COVER

An Bang, Hoi An district, Quang Nam Province, 4th–2nd century B.C.

Earthenware, H: 120 cm × D: 55 cm

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Jar burials occur primarily in maritime contexts in Southeast Asia: the Malay Peninsula, north Borneo, the Sulawesi Sea islands, Indonesia, and the Philippines. In fact, the peoples of the Sa Huynh culture are believed to be of Austronesian descent and therefore linguistically related to the peoples of insular Southeast Asia. Tall, slender, cylindrical covered burial jars have been discovered at numerous sites in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces—at least a thousand have been excavated since 1975.

The jars, placed in the soil vertically, contain offerings that include earthenware ceramics, bronze and iron utensils, and jewelry. Han coins and a few Han mirrors have been found in the burials. In some instances, the offerings appear to have been ritually damaged—pots broken, metal tools disfigured—though jewelry was left intact. Few human remains are extant, possibly owing to the acidity of the

soil, though evidence of burned material and an occasional bone have been found.

The large burial urns, like the smaller ceramics, are often decorated with stamped motifs that are cord-paddled, or incised with fingers or shells. This example has a characteristic “hat-shaped” lid, and the perforations on the flared top of the body of the jar probably allowed the lid to be tied on.

#### LITERATURE

Miriam Lambrecht and Christian Schicklgruber, eds., *Vietnam: Art et cultures de la préhistoire à nos jours*, 2003.