

# 12 CHAMPA ARCHAEOLOGY IN VIETNAM FROM 1975

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Archaeological remains of the culture of Champa were first uncovered in the late 19th century and first studied by French scholars in the early 20th century. Their achievements in the fields of epigraphy, religion and art were remarkable, although there were limitations in the collecting and interpretation of data – due in part to their point of view and also to their methods and techniques of data collection and interpretation. It can be said today that the colonial period research on Champa remains a substantial body of research that invites further research.

Since the reunification of Vietnam in 1975, Champa archaeological research has been promoted in many fields and has been conducted mainly by Vietnamese scholars. However, it can be said that during the first decade of the post-war period, such study was almost forgotten for many reasons, both subjective and objective. Until 1985, only small-scale surveys were conducted by the archaeologists from National University, Hà Nội, and research areas and subjects were very limited. Until recently we had little idea about the living conditions, handicrafts and the economic structure of Champa.

Since the 1990s, Champa research has reached a new level. Building on the achievements of the earlier generations of scholars, those who have studied during this period have stepped up, supplemented and perfected the results in the fields that have been carried out in the past such as architecture, sculpture, and epigraphy and so on. They have also developed from an archaeological perspective, with surveys for discovering new sites and excavations at extant sites, including citadel complexes, trading ports and temple-towers. In their fieldwork, scholars have also focused more attention on handicrafts, including the production of ceramic types and jewelry as well as water management techniques, irrigation, agriculture, and aspects of religious life and long-distance trade.

Although research on architectural and sculptural issues has been limited, excavations

and restoration of temple towers, have brought new knowledge on spatial structure, foundation building and the evolution of architectural art styles and their chronology, as well as on construction technology and materials. New artifacts such as architectural elements, stone sculptures, pottery and jewelry have emerged from recent field work and have considerably enriched the Champa data. According to the statistics, more than 200 Champa sites were listed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the end of that century, more than 300 sites had been recognized and mapped.

Many sites were excavated on a large scale over many years by Vietnamese archaeologists, who were sometimes supported by scholars from Japan, Germany, Italy, Poland and England. The research raised questions about the origin of these sites and their relationships with the Chinese and Indian worlds. The long-term research programs included those listed below.

- An archaeological survey and study program, sponsored by Toyota, at the ancient river port of Hội An and its surrounding, by the University of Hà Nội, and the Centre for Management and Conservation of Hội An Monuments.
- An excavation at Trà Kiệu conducted by archaeologists from the Hanoi National University and Institute of Archaeology, Hanoi, associated with the team from London University and Dr. Mariko Yamagata.
- A research program at Cổ Luỹ Phú Thọ citadel led by the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hà Nội National University, and Quảng Ngãi Provincial Museum.
- The Cù Lao Chàm (Cham Islands) research program also led by University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hanoi National University with the Centre for Management and Conservation of Hội An Monuments.