

A proposed relationship between Champa and Chola dynasties during the 11th and 13th centuries: A view from the historical sources and artistic evidences

VỀ MỐI QUAN HỆ KHẢ HỮU GIỮA CÁC VƯƠNG TRIỀU CHAMPA VÀ CHOLA TRONG THẾ KỶ 11 ĐẾN 13: NHÌN NHẬN TỪ NHỮNG CỨ LIỆU LỊCH SỬ VÀ NGHỆ THUẬT

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PEER REVIEWED

Received January 04, 2021

Accepted March 30, 2021

Published August 30, 2021

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.26721/spafajournal.2021.v5.673>

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Abstract

New construction technology and new aesthetic trends are emphasized as the characteristics of Chola influence which have been adapted in Cham religious architecture. The temple architecture and sculptures of Champa thus provide the best information on reflecting the pinnacle of Champa art dating from the 11th and 13th centuries CE. Champa became a center for transportation with its prosperous port-cities/port-polities expressing demand for import-export commodities, especially the trade between South India and South China. The Champa kingdom had thus been one of the main bridges for Chola art to reach Southeast Asian states which was achieved through the commercial perspective and religious art.

Kiến trúc tôn giáo Champa từng tiếp thu những đặc điểm của Chola mà tiêu biểu là kỹ thuật xây dựng và xu hướng nghệ thuật. Kiến trúc và điêu khắc đền-tháp Champa hàm chứa những thông tin tốt nhất về thời kỳ hưng thịnh của vương quốc từ thế kỷ 11 đến 13 trong mối quan hệ văn hóa với Chola. Champa từng là một trung tâm vận chuyển với hệ thống cảng-thị phát triển, có khả năng đáp ứng được các nhu cầu xuất nhập khẩu hàng hóa cao cấp, đặc biệt trong mỗi giao thương giữa vùng Nam Ấn và Hoa Nam, do đó vương quốc duyên hải này đã giữ vai trò là cầu nối cho nghệ thuật Chola phổ biến ở Đông Nam Á, thành quả này được phản ánh qua lăng kính của các mối quan hệ hải thương cũng như các công trình nghệ thuật tôn giáo.

Keywords: Champa kingdom, Chola dynasties, Cham art, Southeast Asian maritime trade | Vương quốc Champa, vương triều Chola, nghệ thuật Chăm, hải thương Đông Nam Á

Introduction

In this article, trade and religious art of the Champa kingdom will be the main issues to be considered, which can lead to an assessment of the essential role of Champa in connecting the Chola empire with Southeast Asian countries. Champa will first be considered for its geographical location as the hub of the maritime route connecting South India and South China, in which the kingdom had supplied all the demands for import-export goods of natives and of regional residents. The bustle of Cham port-cities can be clues connected with the temple architectures and sculptures of Champa from the 11th to 13th centuries; the contemporary improvements in construction techniques as well as the new aesthetic trends in Cham art that will both prove the acquisition of Chola art; those things may have brought Cham art to a remarkable development during this period.

Although the connection of artistic features of Champa with the characteristics of South Indian art that were first noticed by art historians such as Jean Boisselier (1963: 26-27), Cecelia Levin (2008: 85-99) and Pierre Baptiste (2010: 151-187), there remains a huge gap in knowledge of whether the achievements of the imperial Cholas influenced the religious art of Champa. This essay is an initial study of the issue based on the materials of Cham artworks created during the 11th to 13th centuries as well as the accounts of Vietnamese and Chinese historical sources.

The relationship between Chola and Champa is preliminary, one is therefore expected to introduce more understanding of one empire most notable of South India, and its prominent role throughout Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean in the 11th century (Kulke 2009: xv). The Champa kingdom's role was discussed as an intermediate strategy in maritime trade spread across the South Seas (Nanhai), and the improvements of the kingdom's religious art during this period as well.

Much of the meaning can be inferred from the context "Chola's naval expedition to Srivijaya" which is mentioned in the Chola's inscriptions. The Vietnamese and Chinese historical accounts can be used as additional evidence for the relationship between Champa and Chola in which the first battles between the Viet and the Cham occurred during the end of 10th and the beginning of 11th century to be compared with those of the textual notes from the Chola inscriptions and the Arab travelers' accounts at that time. Besides, awareness of the relationship between Champa and Chola that would be accessed through the Cham artworks and its neighbors would propose the new art trends in Southeast Asian states that was inspired from Chola dynasty in the contemporary contexts.

A new perspective on the relationship between the Champa and Chola dynasties through the historical records

Although it has been argued that the spread of Indian culture through the Bay of Bengal has been declining gradually since the 11th century, maritime trade activities between India and Southeast Asia continued through the last centuries of the first millennium CE. In the early 11th century, ca. 1025, Chola King Rajendra I carried out the naval expeditions and was noted through inscriptions, "despatched many ships in the midst of the rolling sea"; and he also took over many port-cities of the famous Southeast Asian kingdom of Srivijaya in Sumatra as well as on the Malay Peninsula (Coedès 1968: 142-143). It was the only warlike incident occurred in the long peaceful and cultural relationship between India and its neighboring kingdoms in Southeast Asia (Kulke 2009: xiii). In

addition, Buddhism and Hinduism were imprinted on the appearance of Island Southeast Asian cultures from before the 11th century, in which Amaravati Buddhist art and the earliest Pallava Grantha inscriptions from South India dated back to the 5th century were found in present-day Indonesia, and at the Mỹ Sơn sanctuary of Champa kingdom in central Vietnam, followed by the stronger impacts of the art and architectural features of Pallava and Chola to Southeast Asia as Hermann Kulke pointed out (*ibid.*).

The great conquests of Chola over Srivijaya in 1025, followed by other smaller naval conquests in ca. 1070, remains a conundrum for historians (Kulke 2009: xiv). In 1955, Nalakanta Sastri raised the question “why was this expedition against the king of Kadam [Kedah] undertaken and what were its effects?” and he suggests that “We have to assume either some attempt on part of Srivijaya to throw obstacles in the way of the Chola trade with the east, or more probably, a simple desire on the part of Rajendra to extend his *digvijaya* [‘world conquest’] to the countries across the sea so well-known to his subjects at home, and thereby add lustre to his crown.” (Sastri 1955: 218-220). R. C. Majumdar (1961: 338-342) suggested that the conquests of Chola to Southeast Asia in the early 11th century may be interpreted in two ways, “It may be that Rajendra Chola threatened to invade Kambuja and her King tried to avert the disaster by conciliating him. It is, however, equally, or even more likely in view of the language of the record, that the King of Kambuja was eager to enlist the support of Rajendra against an enemy who threatened his Kingdom.” The second point in the suggestion of Majumdar perhaps corresponds to the case of Champa that is discussed below.

It is necessary to reassess the Rajendra’s expeditions to Southeast Asia in the 1070s which will be based on the history and perspectives of Champa. Lê Hoàn, the first emperor of Đại [Cồ] Việt, was mentioned in the Vietnamese historical sources as attacking the capital city of Champa, i.e. Đông Dương, in 982 (Cœdès 1968: 124; Nguyen 2005: 7-9). This historical event was recorded in the Vietnamese historical book of Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư [The Complete Historical Books of the Great Viet]:

“Vua thân chinh đi đánh Chiêm Thành, thắng được [...] Bắt sống được quân sĩ của chúng nhiều vô kể, cùng là kỹ nữ trong cung trăm người và một nhà sư người Thiên Trúc, lấy các đồ quý đem về, thu được vàng bạc của báu kể hàng vạn; san phẳng thành trì, phá hủy tông miếu, vừa một năm thì trở về kinh đô.”

“The king himself commanded to attack Chiêm Thành [Champa] and won a victory [...] They captured countless of Cham soldiers, many concubines and servants and a Buddhist monk from Tiānzhū [India], all of whom had also been detained; they had brought back [to Đại Việt] precious treasure together with wealth in gold and silver; they had destroyed city-wall and temples [of Champa]. After a year, the king returned to his capital [of Hoa Lư, Đại Việt].” (Toàn Thư 1993: 222)

The Đông Dương Buddhist monastery was attacked and destroyed by Lê Hoàn which is recorded in the Vietnamese historical sources. This destruction is also supported by archaeological evidence found by the French archaeologists in 1902, where Henri Parmentier mentioned:

“Cette tour a dû subir diverses vicissitudes. Le piédestal a sans doute été démoli dans un but de pillage; l’intérieur en a été fouillé jusque dans ses fondations de briques. Un

feu formidable a brûlé les parois de la salle, noirci les sculptures et rongé les faces mêmes de cette fouille profonde; l'arrière-linteau a eu sa face inférieure toute fendillée par le feu, ce qui prouve que l'incendie eut lieu lorsque la salle était encore couverte.”

“This tower had to undergo various vicissitudes. The pedestal was undoubtedly demolished for the purpose of looting; the interior has been dugged down to its brick foundations. A tremendous fire burned down the walls of the room, blackened the sculptural works and gnawed into the very surfaces of this deep digging; the rear lintel had been completely cracked by the fire, which proves that the fire took place when the room was still covered [by a roof].” (Parmentier 1909: 446; see also Nguyen 2005: 8-9).

Nowadays one can still observe the trace of black smoke remained on the main altar of the *Đông Dương* monastery displayed at the Danang Museum of Cham Sculpture [*Đông Dương* gallery; acc. no. 22.24a] (Trần, Võ and Sharrock 2018: 154-155, cat. 14).

In 984, after Lê Hoàn had withdrawn from Champa, one of his generals namely Lư Kỵ Tông seized the power. The Việt usurper officially proclaimed himself king of Champa and in 986 he notified the court of China of his accession (Cœdès 1968: 124-125). Although, Lư Kỵ Tông has usurped the throne only a short period, he cruelly dominated over the Cham people which was recorded by an Arab witness, “Abu Dulaf said: At the time when I was in India [around the middle of tenth century], the king who ruled Campa was called Lagin. The monk of Nadjran told me that at that time [980-986], the king [of Campa] was a king of Lukin [Lư Kỵ?] who had occupied Campa, ravaged her and enslaved all her peoples” (Ferrand 1913: 123). The events which Arab traders went through may have been corresponded the contemporaneous happening in the North Champa that was also recorded in Vietnamese historical sources as mentioned above (Nguyen 2005: 8).

This important event was also recorded by the Chinese book of Song Huiyao Jigao, this book telling that during the early 80s of the 10th century, there was a war between Champa and Đại [Cồ] Việt; thus Lê Hoàn wanted to offer ninety-three Cham war prisoners to the Song court. In the year 985, a Cham ambassador had complained that his territory was occupied by Giao Châu (Đại [Cồ] Việt) and the Cham people had to escape to the Song territory to avoid the Vietnamese attacks. In the end of 986, a Song administrative unit in Hainan noted that there have been about one hundred Cham people who escaped into this island (Wade 2011a: 143-145). Thus, this severe historical event was echoed to both of India and South China, perhaps it badly impacted to the contemporary trade relationship. This was the first invasion of Đại Việt to the political, economic and religious center of Champa; caused serious damages to the North Champa hence the economic activities in this region probably were completely suspended (Trần 2017: 597-603).

Based on the Song historical accounts, Hoàng Xuân Hãn indicates that the Chams were enticed by Song dynasty to challenge the Vietnamese which was the main cause to make the pre-Lê and Lý

Dynasties invaded Champa¹; hence, King Lê Đại Hành (Lê Hoàn) in 982, and General Lý Thường Kiệt in 1044 and 1069, had to keep the initiative by starting to conquer Champa in advance in order to prevent the risk that the Chams and the Song would join forces to create pressure to attack Đại Việt (Jiao-zhi) from both the south and the north while a major battle was being established to invade Đại Việt in 1077 (Hoàng 1966: 234-263). Geoff Wade (2011a: 152) also pointed out that the Song again renewed supplies of horses, mules and weapons to Champa during the late 1060 and early 1070s; especially in 1076, where they warned the Chams that they were dispatching an attack against Đại Việt and seeking military support from both Champa and Cambodia.

The northern parts of Champa fell into the turbulent period from the end of 10th to the mid- 11th centuries because of the incessant wars with Đại Việt (Cœdès 1968: 139-141), meanwhile, the southern parts of the kingdom remained reasonably stable and were ruled by other powerful kings as mentioned in several inscriptions found at the Po Nagar Nha Trang sanctuary and in Panduranga region (modern day Ninh Thuận province). These inscriptions state about the power of kings and their donation to rebuild several royal religious foundations during that period such as King Jaya Paramesvaravarman I at the Po Nagar temple in 1050, at the Lai Cham temple in Kauthara, and at the Phú Quý temple in Panduranga in 1055/1056; King Rudravarman III at the Po Nagar temple in 1062/1063, so on (Gozio 2004:128-135 [C.30B3], [C.122], [C.39], [C.95], [C.31A2])².

It is thus proposed that the Cham kings, from the southern kingdom including the states of Panduranga³, Kauthara and Vijaya, may have asked for military help from the Cholas in order to retrieve the northern kingdom that had fallen to the hands of Đại Việt army. If so, we may compare this suggestion that coincides deeply with Sastri's arguments, "We shall see later that one of the successors of Rajendra, Virarajendra I, claims to have conquered Kadaram and restored it to its ruler who supplicated for it before the conqueror. In any case, there is no evidence to show that the Colas made any attempt to rule these lands as provinces of their empire" (Sastri 1955: 220).

Another historical fact deals with the above-mentioned events and its opinion is equally important. Sri Harivarman was, known as the contemporary Cham king (ca. 1074-1081), regaining the kingdom from Đại Việt, who brought peace and stability to the kingdom perhaps under Chola's military support (?). His merit was thus praised in the inscriptions found at Mỹ Sơn sanctuary, as

¹ "The Song king directed, «Chiêm-thành, Chân-lạp vốn là huyết thù của Giao-chi. Vậy sai Hứa Ngạn-Tiên 許彦先 và Lưu Sơ 劉初 mộ dăm ba người buôn bễ, đi dụ các quốc trưởng nước ấy dự vào việc đánh Giao-chi. Khi nào bình-định xong, sẽ có trọng thưởng.»" [«Champa and Chenla both have had the bloody enmity with Jiao-zhi [Đại Việt]. Thus, demanding Xu Yanxian 許彦先 and Liu Chu 劉初 to select some of the maritime traders [Chinese?] then requesting them to persuade the lords of those states to involve in the battle with Jiao-zhi. It will be well rewarded to them once the pacification is complete.»] (Hoàng 1966: 234-235).

² [C.] is access code of Cham inscriptions.

³ According to George Cœdès, an inscription of Rajendra I found at the temple of Tanjore, dated in 1030-1031, states that the king conquered successfully several lands in Southeast Asia, amongst them there was a place name so-called 'Valaippanduru' that he argues, perhaps, the name of Pandur[anga] or Phan Rang of Champa (Cœdès 1968: 143, notes 79, 82).

follows, “The enemies had entered into the kingdom of Campā and installed themselves as masters; having taken possession of all the royal property and the wealth of the gods; having pillaged the temples, the monasteries [...]; having ravaged everything in the provinces of the kingdom of Campā; having plundered the temple of Śrīśānabhadreśvara and all the objects which the kings of past times had granted as endowments to Śrīśānabhadreśvara; having taken all the riches of the god and carried away the men belonging to the temple, the dancers, musicians [...] Then His Majesty Vijaya Śrī Harivarmadeva, yāñ Devatāmūrti ascended the throne. He completely defeated the enemies, proceeded to the Nagara Campā and restored the temple of Śrīśānabhadreśvara [...] And reestablished... with all the crops destroyed... The kingdom of Campā became prosperous as of old times. Then Harivarman celebrated his coronation [...]” (Majumdar 1985: III, 159-161; Gozio 2004: 136-137 [C.94]. As a result, under the reign of Sri Harivarman, the Chola art influences created substantial imprints that can be seen on the Cham temple-towers built at the royal sanctuaries such as Mý Son and Po Nagar Nha Trang (Trần 2009: 155-186; Baptiste 2010: 151-187).

Role of the Chams and Cholas on the maritime trade route

In the 11th century, commercial interactions took place between Tamil traders and residents in Quanzhou, the port city of Fujian province, China, and other city-ports of Southeast Asia. It was due to the established maritime trade that not only connected South India and Southeast Asia but also expanded to South China, due to the dominance of Southern India by the Chola empire (Kulke 2009: xiii-xx; Sen 2009: 61-75). Through the years as 1017, 1025 and 1077, diplomatic ambassadors and trade envoys were sent to the Song court from the Chola empire (Dehejia 1990: xiv; Chaffee 2006: 339). Today, more than three hundred Hindu monuments, including temple architecture and sculpture, survived in Quanzhou. They were built in the 11th to 13th century in order to serve the Tamil merchant guilds and other Hindu believers as well. All of those religious architectures were built during the Chola period (Guy 2001: 283-307; Lee 2012: 134-185).

The remarkable trade between South India and South China was the result of the major economic event which occurred in the early 12th century. Typically, the convenient financial policy and the new coin minting technique, together with the Southern Song dynasty's open maritime trade policy (1127-1279), had a positive effect on trade throughout Southeast Asia. Champa was the direct beneficiary of this achievement because the kingdom was basically the closest place for South China to trade luxury forest products (Chaffee 2006: 398-399; Wade 2009: 22-31). Angela Schottenhammer (2015: 20) emphasized that Champa was one of the most active tribute bringers to the Song court in Guangzhou during the 10th and 11th centuries.

The Cham port-cities had to play an important role as a midpoint in the bustling maritime trade route between South India and South China, in the context of that time. The Vietnamese historical source of An Nam Chí Lược 安南志略 [Abbreviated Historical Records of An Nam/Vietnam] published in 1335 noted that Champa was the first place in which Chinese merchant ships had to be disembarked to stay, to get fresh water and firewood for their cruise to the further south until the early 14th century (Lê 2002: 72-73). Hence, the economy of Champa was highly prosperous during that time thanks to its role as a major intermediary in the maritime trade relationship and the full

promotion of the convenient network of port-cities as the entrepôts supplying precious forest products to the international market.

Donating to build religious works was a highly respected in Indian cultural tradition. In South India, many Buddhist and Hindu temples for pilgrims were built thanks to Tamil traders donating under the protection of the great Chola dynasties from the 9th to 13th centuries (Lee 2012: 55-85). The Nagapattinam temple was, known as a Buddhist temple was built during the reign of Narashimhavarman II in the late seventh century, ca. 695-722. The temple was honored by rich donations under the reign of King Chola Rajaraja I in 1006, due to the financing mentioned above in order to serve foreign traders in South India (Dehejia 1990: 77-78; Ray 2014a: 1-18); besides, there have been several other Hindu temples were also built by Tamil believers in Quanzhou during the 12th to 13th century (Lee 2009: 240-270). Such religious activities of Tamil merchants created profoundly cultural influences on contemporary Southeast Asian kingdoms, including Champa (Levin 2008: 85-99; Ray 2014b: 1-18; Miksic 2019: 67-78).

Therefore, Cham kings have probably received donations generously from the royalty, nobility and foreign traders who resided around the kingdom's port-cities, from which many expensive religious buildings could have been constructed. Recently, in the late 1990s, the new findings at Mỹ Sơn site of the Cham royal sanctuary have provided evidence regarding donations to the Cham Hindu temple. During the excavations for restoration at the Mỹ Sơn G temple-group, the Italian experts discovered three bricks of decorative corner pieces (pièce d'accent) on which were those engraved the Old Chinese characters of '陳' ['Chen'] (or 'Trần', a family name in Vietnamese) (Zolese 2009: 197-237); they are now displayed at the Mỹ Sơn Site Museum. The character of 'Chen' is more likely to be the family name of a Chinese merchant⁴ who contemporarily resided in Champapura (Chan-ch'eng 占城 in Chinese; Chiêm Thành or Đại Chiêm Hải Khẩu in Vietnamese, meaning Port of Great Champa, the Ancient Town of Hội An in present time), and offered donations for the construction of the royal temple of King Jaya Harivarman in 1157/1158 (Stern 1942: 105-107). Such contributions to build the main temple of the king at the royal sanctuary also brought prestige to the donors among the foreign trader community. Notably, there have been many foreign merchant communities living in the port-cities of Champa (Hardy 2009: 107-126; Schottenhammer 2015: 18-19; Hall 2018: 19-30), among them the Chinese and Muslim merchants may have played a significant role (Nakamura 2000: 55-66; Chaffee 2006: 398-399; Wade 2011b: 369-370). This could be further confirmed that the Mỹ Sơn G temple-group was built in the middle of 12th century, which was also the very prosperous period of trade activities between South China and South India, in which Champa was an outstanding center for transportation. According to historians, foreign traders living in the large port-cities of Champa may include Arabs, Tamil, North Indian, Chinese, Malay, Khmer and Vietnamese, so on; as a result, the Cham language has adopted many vocabularies from those foreign languages (Maspero 1928: 7, note 4).

⁴ In the email exchanges with Qian Jian and Geoff Wade, the two historians have confirmed that the family name 'Chen' of Chinese merchants was popular in the southern Fujian province during the 12th century (Email on 14 May 2015). By here we would like to thank them for their discussion.

The art relationship between Chola and Champa

In 2006, one of the authors had the occasion to survey the Bujang Valley ruins in Kedah, Malaysia. This is the most abundant Hindu and Buddhist monument in this region and was developed over centuries from the 8th to 13th century CE (Nik Hassan and Yatim 1990: 1-42; Hassan et al. 2011: 27-50; Andaya 2011: 69-94). This ruin is located in a large river estuary which played the role of an important port-city on the Indian Ocean trade routes (Murphy 2017: 1-35). In 1025, Chola King Rajendra I conquered this port-city and named it Kadaram (Kedah) (Christie 1998: 239-268; Miksic 2019: 67-78). A square sandstone pedestal found at the site is the most noticeable thing, decorated with a stylized pattern that is very similar to those of the sculptural works created by the Cham during the 11th and 12th century. The size of the Bujang pedestal measures in 88 cm wide x 87 cm long x 47 cm in high, which is represented by a stylized lotus flower combined in two horizontal moldings with a well-proportioned layout (Figure 1). The upper side was perforated, at the middle, a multi-edged square hole to mount with another part; this is a kind of altar so-called ‘bali-pitha’ or offering-altar which is installed in front of the main temple in a complex temple-tower of Chola art period (Sastri 1955: 707-709). Michael Sullivan (1957: 293-295) has pointed out a detailed similarity of this pedestal to those of the Cham pedestals found at Trà Kiệu and Mỹ Sơn sites; and, he also hypothesized that, “Kedah was a connection link between South India and the kingdom of Champa.”



Fig. 1 The unique square pedestal in the form of lotus petals represented by horizontal moldings found at Bujang Valley, Kedah, Malaysia. Made in sandstone in the 11th to 12th century. Source: Photo by Trần Kỳ Phương.

In Cham sculptural art, this type of offering - an altar ‘bali-pitha’ and the temple-base - represented a highly stylized lotus composition and appeared commonly during the 11th and 12th centuries. The typical sculptural works of this type including the well-known sandstone pedestal known as the ‘Dancer of Trà Kiệu’, measures in 270 cm wide x 110 cm high, created in the second half of 11th

century, and is currently on display at the Danang Museum of Cham Sculpture now (Figure 2). Another square carved pedestal was engraved with four elephants and found at Triền Tranh site, Duy Trinh district, Quảng Nam province, which measures by 76 cm wide x 75 cm long x 63 cm high and now displayed at the Museum of Sa Huỳnh-Champa Culture in Trà Kiệu, Quảng Nam province (Figure 3; Trần 2018: 222-225). Besides, there are several temple-bases composed in stylized lotus shapes which are formed by a series of moldings beginning top and bottom with cyma which belonged to the Mỹ Sơn temple-complexes (Figures 4 and 5).



Fig. 2 The well-known pedestal so-called ‘Trà Kiệu Dancers’. Made in sandstone; dated in the second half of 11th century. On display at the Danang Museum of Cham Sculpture, Vietnam. Photo Trần Kỳ Phương.



Fig. 3 The sandstone pedestal carved with four elephants on a lotus represented in horizontal moldings beginning top and bottom with cyma. The type of the pedestal is popular in Cham sculpture during the 11th and 12th centuries. On display at the Museum of Sa Huỳnh-Champa Culture in Trà Kiệu townlet, Duy Xuyên district, Quảng Nam province. Photo Tú Anh.



Fig. 4 The Mỹ Sơn B5 temple of Mỹ Sơn sanctuary built in the 10th and 11th century composing with a curved roof, double pilasters, sandstone door pillars and horizontal molds in lotus shapes that influenced from Chola art features. The so-called ‘fire-tower’ by Cham people nowadays was where the sacred fire and ritual objects were kept. Photo Trần Kỳ Phương.

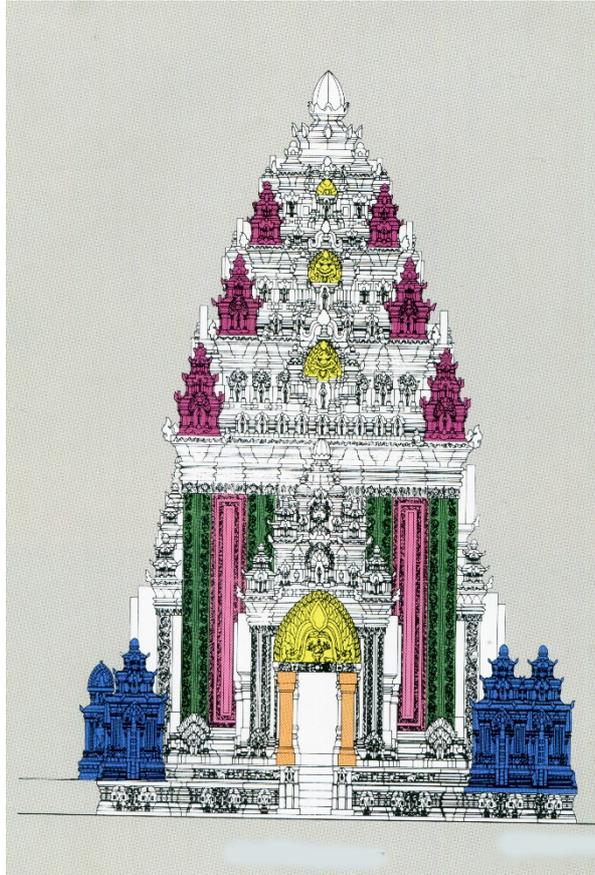


Fig. 5 The main sanctuary (*kalan*) of Mỹ Sơn A1 and six small temples, from A2-A7, erected around the temple-base built during the 10th and 11th century. This is a masterpiece of Cham art with 28m high. Source: Drawing courtesy of Shigeda Yutaka.

In terms of art form, we can easily notice a deep similarity in the function as well as the style of expression and the formation of the sculptural works mentioned above. These sculptural works can be considered as lively evidence for an art relationship within Southeast Asia which received a new aesthetic trend from the art influences of the contemporary Chola dynasties that can be seen at Bujang Valley and Sumatra (Miksic 2019: 67-78), in Java (Devare 2009: 178-192; Shanmugam 2009: 208-226), and at the Cham Khương Mỹ temples in Central Vietnam (Levin 2008: 85-99; Griffiths, Schoettel and Chinh 2017: 13-38). The new attraction from South Indian art has been absorbed and filtered through the lens of local artists. The localization of the new art features to be created in the architectural forms, decorative programs and patterns of the temples. As a result, the techniques for building Cham religious architecture were improved, thanks to the adoption of religious architectural techniques during the Chola period at the Mỹ Sơn sanctuary, for instance, the temple-complexes the groups of A-B-C-D that have been completely improved technically (Figure 6) (Trần, Akiko and Toshihiko 2005: 1-26). In addition, the Cham temples have been built on a higher scale, composed by high stone temple-bases with their rich sculptural narratives that can be found at the Chiên Đàn, Khương Mỹ and Tháp Bạc (Silver Tower) temple groups, so on (Figures 7, 8 and 9) (Trần 2008: 59-72; 2018: 43, fig. 14).

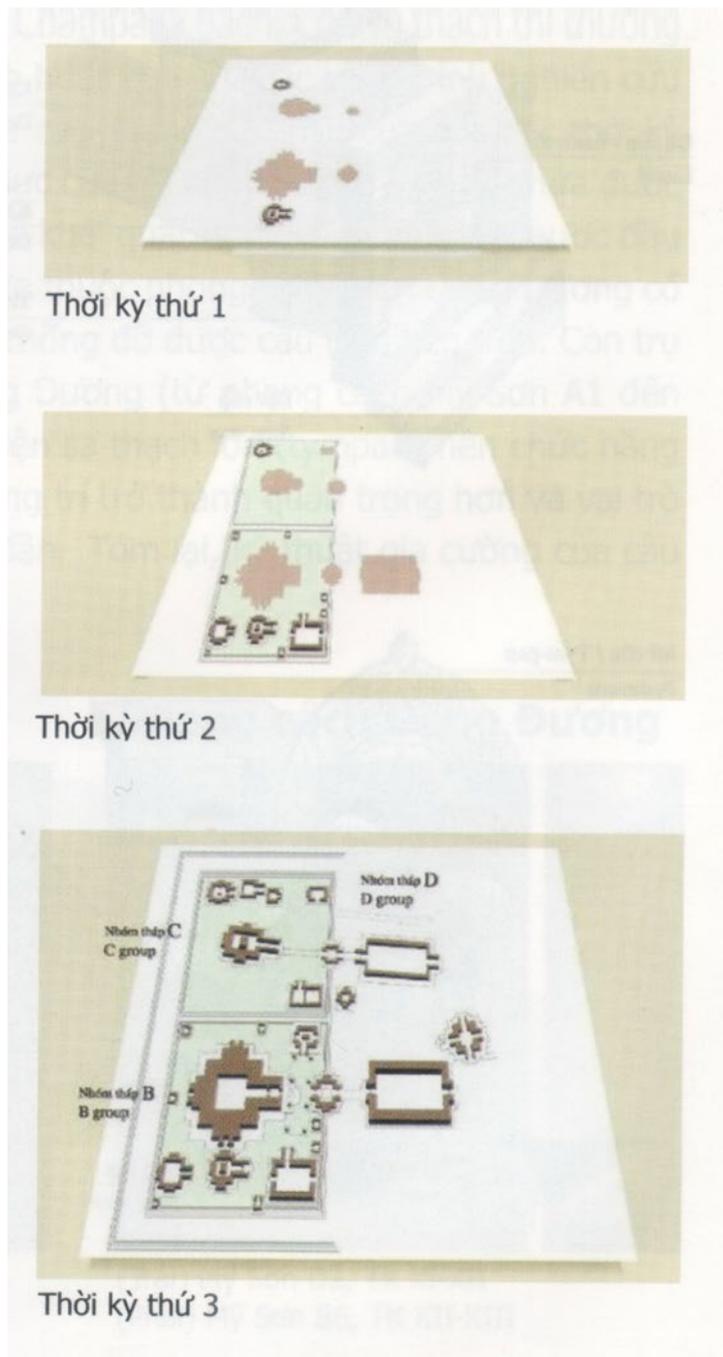


Fig. 6 The process of the temple complexes of the Mỹ Sơn B-C-D groups through the three architectural stages. The first stage: ca. the 7th to 8th centuries; The second stage: ca. the 9th to 10th century; The third stage: ca. the 11th to 13th century. In which the third stage had strongly received the art influences from Chola. The composition of a complex of temple-towers in this stage comprised: kalan (main temple) + gopura (gate tower) + mandapa (exterior hall) + secondary shrines and kosagrha (fire-tower) + enclosures. Source: Trần, Akiko and Toshihiko 2005.



Fig. 7 Chiên Đàn temple complex decorated with stone base carving narrative sculpture built in the 11th to 12th centuries. Source: Photo by Tú Anh.



Fig. 8 Bas-relief depicting Ramayana theme at the Khương Mỹ stone temple-base. Dated in the 11th to 12th centuries. Source: Photo by Trần Kỳ Phương.

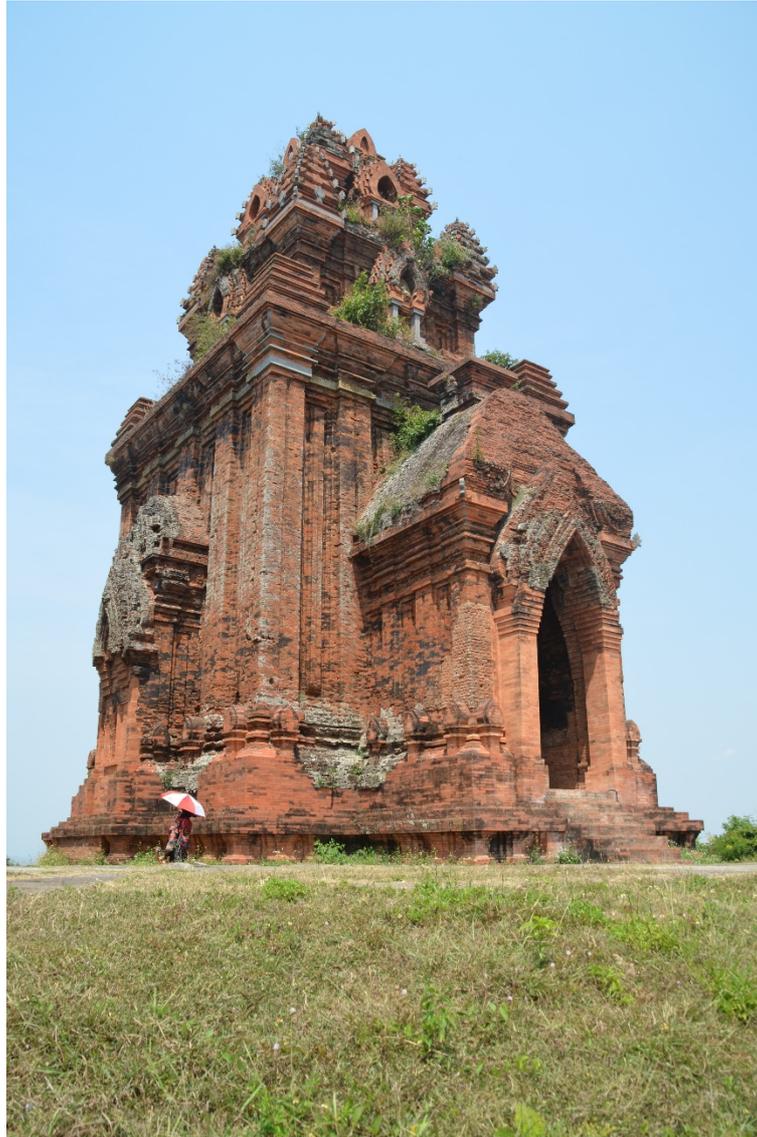


Fig. 9 Kalan Tháp Bạc or Silver Tower, located at the center of Vijaya Champa state, Bình Định province today, erected during the 11th and 12th centuries CE. Vijaya was the capital city of King Jaya Harivarman who ruled the kingdom in the middle of 12th century CE. During his reign Champa built a worldwide relationship with Chola, China, Cambodia and Java, so on. Source: Photo by Trần Kỳ Phương.

Regarding iconography, the typical features of Mahisasuramardini or Durga, which widely appeared in Chola art, can also be found in Cham art. For instance, the standing goddess on a buffalo with multi-arms holding weapons together with her attendants to be represented on the pediment of the Shiva temples such as Po Nagar Nha Trang, Mỹ Sơn, Chiên Đàn, and so on (Pal 1969: 165-72; Lee 2012: 82-83) (Figures 10 and 11). And the narrative sculpture depicted Ramayana themes that popularly appeared in the Chola temple reliefs (Sanford 1974: 1-8) can also be seen on the relief decorations of the Cham temple bases constructed during the 11th to 12th

century such as Chiên Đàn, Khương Mỹ, Tháp Bạc (Levin 2008: 85-99; Griffiths, Schoettel and Chinh 2017: 13-38) (Figures 7 and 8).



Fig. 10 The image of Durga or Mahisasuramardini on the pediment of Po Nagar Nha Trang temple. Dated in the 11th century. Source: Photo by Tú Anh.



Fig. 11 The tympanum of Mahisasuramardini found at the Chiên Đàn temple complex. Dated in the 11th to 12th century. Source: Photo by Tú Anh.

The evidence pointed out in the field of art history have been able to provide objectively the convincing clues on the interactions between South India and Southeast Asia. The art characteristics of Chola brought new inspirations to the art improvement of Southeast Asia during the 11th to 13th century, which can be seen on the more magnificent temple architecture and sculptures inclining to the aesthetic trend of realistic expression; among them the art of Champa is a typical example.

Although many inscriptions written in Tamil language have been found in most ancient states in Southeast Asia as well as in Quanzhou, Fujian; no Tamil inscriptions have yet been found in the Cham territories so far⁵, despite Chola artistic features has appeared clearly in Cham art in the 11th to 13th century as mentioned above (Christie 1998: 239-268; Nakashima and Subbarayalu 2009: 271-291).

In a later period during the 15th century, according to the Ma Huan Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan 瀛涯胜览 [The Overall Survey of the Oceans Shores], written in ca. 1434-1436, in which the contemporary king of Champa was noted that he is mostly belonged to Chola or Indian lineage (Mills 1970: 79, note 6). It can lead to an affirmation of the close relationship between Champa and Chola which may obtain through various historical sources.

Conclusion

The evidence for the naval expeditions of the Chola rulers to Southeast Asia is very rare; coming mainly from the brief references in the eulogistic verses of the stone inscriptions. It remains a big gap of information about the organization and operation of the Chola navy (Subbarayalu 2009: 91-95). It was most likely that the Chola expeditions, besides deploying the military and political activities, were aimed at maintaining essential trade relations between South India and South China. Could these factors have led to Champa becoming an excellent commercial intermediary?

The Chola naval expeditions may have been considered as not only military assistance to recover peace for Champa but also to “establish trading rights for Tamil-speaking merchants in those areas, a trade from which the ruler, the merchants and the Chola bureaucracy could expect sizable profit” in the context of the crisis of politics and economics of the Cham people in the period from the end of 10th to middle of 11th century, as it was pointed out by historians (Kulke 2009: xiv). In order to continue to decipher the key historical events that caused the strong influences of Chola art to

⁵ Several shipwrecks have recently been found at Bình Châu, Quảng Ngãi province, of which most of the ceramic items dated back to the Tang dynasty (618-907), currently belong to the Lâm Dũ Xênh's collection. There is a large number of ceramic shards incised Arabic, Sinitic and Indic scripts, more than 150 ceramic shards incised Indic characters have been identified among them. Those belong to a group of Southern Brahmi scripts used in South Asia and Southeast Asia (Nishino et al. 2014: 149-50; Đỗ 2016: 75; McCann 2019: 17).

Champa as well as to the other contemporary arts of Southeast Asian during the 11th to 13th century, especially, from the view of Champa as mentioned above, it will require more elaborate research work in the future.

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