

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES IN 2006

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In September 2006, the Archaeological Institute (of the Vietnam Institute of Social Sciences and Humanity) held its 41st workshop on archaeology in Hanoi. Nearly 500 scientific reports were sent to the workshop. These reports centered on the main fields of archaeology, such as Archaeology of the Stone Age, Metallic Archaeology, Historical Archaeology, and Champa Oc Eo Archaeology. At the workshop, Assoc. Prof., Dr. Tong Trung Tin presented a review on archaeological activities in 2006. The Social Sciences Review would like to introduce his report in full.

I. Archaeology of the Stone Age

There were 12 excavations.

The Archaeological Institute and Kon Tum Museum excavated an area of 8,000 m² in Plei Kong hydroelectrical reservoir. They found nine relic zones with various objects dating back the Post-Neolithic Age and the Iron Age. This is the second biggest excavation after Lung Leng archaeological site in Kon Tum province.

Quang Tri Museum and the Archaeological Institute excavated Hang Doi archaeological site in Cam Thanh commune, Cam Lo district. Its stratigraphy was 1.8 to 2 metres thick. Vestiges of hearths, burials, shells, animal bones and teeth and 394 stone relics were found. Hang Doi I could be considered a relic zone dating back to the Hoa Binh Culture of 15,000-20,000 years ago.

Son La Museum and the Archaeological Institute carried out an excavation in Co Tien Cave (Song Ma district). Its

stratigraphy was 60-70 cm thick. They found vestiges of hearths, burials, molluses, stone tools and pottery fragments. It was estimated that Co Tien Cave was about 6,000-5,000 years old.

Khanh Hoa Museum and the Archaeological Institute excavated Con so diep Van Tu Dong. Its stratigraphy was 120 cm thick. Vestiges of hearths, pottery fragments and 261 relics were found. This archaeological site belonged to Con so type dating back 3,000 to 3,500 years.

Da Lat University and the Archaeological Institute unearthed a relic zone in Thon Bon (Lam Dong). Its stratigraphy was 30 to 35 cm thick. The remains included 7,860 stone objects and thousands of pottery fragments. This relic zone dated back to the Post-Neolithic age (Bronze Age), about 3,500 years ago.

Moreover, the Stone Age Archaeology also discovered many new relics, such as old

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stone tools on craters in Gieng Tien (Quang Ngai), Thon Sau (Dac Nong), Tuyen Lam Lake, Suoi Mot, Suoi Ba, Suoi Voi (Lam Dong), Hang Doi II (Quang Tri, Son Vi (Tan An, Lao Cai), Na Khuyen cave, Nguom Be cave, Hon Doi relic zone (Quang Ninh), Thon Ba, Thon Nam, Thon Tam, Ha Mon, Ktul, Ea Po (Kon Tum), Gia Lam (Lam Dong), Vinh Yen (Khanh Hoa). Nguom Cang cave (Cao Bang) and Nguom Sau cave (Lang Son) were also explored.

Paleo-anthropologists and paleo-environmentalists did research on mens and animals remains in archaeological sites in Hang Doi, western Thanh Hoa and western Nghe An to identify the nature and life of pre-historic men. The custom to place sea snails in orbit in Phai Vai cave (Tuyen Quang) 3,000 years ago was notable. C14 chronological analysis in many archaeological sites such as Lung Leng (Kon Tum), Dong Cuong (Binh Dinh) was very useful for the study of archaeological sites.

II. Metallic archaeology

There were 8 excavations.

Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanity and Phu Tho Museum carried out the second excavation in Thanh Den archaeological site and the first excavation in Go Chua Cao. A lot of the scientific content of Thanh Den archaeological site was clarified. According to many archaeologists, this site belonged to the 3rd period of the Phung Nguyen culture.

The Vietnam Historical Museum carried out the 6th excavation at Xom Ren archaeological site (Phu Tho). The excavation revealed a dwelling - burial relic with a homogeneous stratigraphy dating back 3,500 years.

Dau Ram archaeological site (in Quang Ninh) was excavated by the Archaeological Institute and Quang Ninh Museum. Its

lower layer was similar to Trang Kenh relic zone in Hai Phong, the upper layer to Duong Co period (of the Dong Son culture).

Phu Tho Museum and the Archaeological Institute returned to Lang Ca to discovered 10 burial sites of the Dong Son culture.

Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanity and Ha Tay Museum unearthed a site on Dong Dong Hill. This site had a stratigraphy of the late Phung Nguyen culture and Go Mun culture and burials of the Dong Son culture. This is a remarkable site in studying the early history of our country.

In the southern part of the country, the Vietnam Historical Museum and Binh Thuan Museum excavated Da Kai archaeological site. This site belonged to the Metallic Age, dating back 3,000 years.

The Archaeological Institute and Long An Museum excavated Lo Gach site which dated back 2,200 - 2,500 years. Records of this excavation helped to clarify the evolution from the Post-metallic Age to the Oc Eo culture, about which both archaeologists and historians are concerned.

The most typical artifacts found in many zones were drums and jars to contain water or rice. In Thanh Hoa, they found Bai Tranh, Cam Thach and Ba Thuoc kettledrums, Xuan Quang, Xuan Lap, Thanh Kim and Thach Thanh bronze jars and some kettledrums in private collections. They also found a Xa Liet drum in Son La, a Nhon Mai kettledrum in Nghe An, a Phu Thinh basin-shaped drum in Ha Tay and a West Thu Bon kettledrum in Quang Nam.

In addition, there were over 40 reports on the discoveries of new relics and in-depth research on drill manufacturing, designs on pottery, stratigraphy and C14.

III. Historical archaeology

There were 12 excavations and explorations.

Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanity incorporated with the Archaeological Institute to excavate a site in Hoa Lam Vien in Gia Lam district. Many pottery fragments of the Ly-Tran dynasty, including high-quality pottery, were unearthed.

Yen Bai Museum and the Archaeological Institute carried out the 3rd excavation in an area of 1,000 sq. metres in Hac Y to discover 12 terra-cotta towers and an abundance of bricks, tiles, and glazed terra-cotta objects of the Tran dynasty.

Yen Bai Museum and the Archaeological Institute also carried out a big excavation on an area of over 1,000 sq. metres and discovered 10 towers, foundations of stone walls, bronze coins and a large variety of bricks and tiles of the Tran dynasty, which were similar to the findings in the Hac Y relic zone.

In Nam Dinh, the Archaeological Institute and Nam Dinh investigated 4 sites in Van Khoanh, Hau Boi, De Tam Tay and Luu Pho. They found traces of dwellers of the Tran-Le dynasty in Hau Boi, De Tam Tay and Luu Pho.

The Vietnam Historical Museum carried out an excavation in Ba Tam pagoda and found traces of the Ly dynasty architecture, including brick foundations, grounds, and a sewer system built with tube-tiles and bricks made by Chuong Thanh Gia Khanh, the 3rd King of the Ly dynasty (1066).

In Dau pagoda, the Vietnam Historical Museum and Ha Tay Museum identified the vestiges from the 16th and 17th centuries in the downtown and architectural vestiges of the Tran dynasty.

Bac Giang Museum and the Archaeological Institute excavated Bui Ben brick kilns.

They found traces of kilns, bricks and tiles dating back to the early 20th century.

In the ancient village of Duong Lam (Ha Tay), Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanity and Japanese archaeologists explored Mong Phu and Van Chi communal houses and Ngo Quyen and Tan Vien temples to find many relics proving that there was permanent residence there, especially in 8th-9th and 17th-18th centuries.

The Management Board of historical and beauty places of Quang Ninh and the Archaeological Institute carried out the first excavation of Bach Dang stakes in Van Muoi field and unearthed 38 stakes along with 13 open-cast stakes, which helped to make remarkable progress in studying the battle witnessing our great victory over the Mong Nguyen troops in 1288.

In Hoi An, the World's heritage, a group of Vietnamese and Japanese researchers found the permanent dwelling stratigraphy in 17th century with Japanese Hizen pottery fragments and traces of wood architecture.

Apart from those excavations, Historical Archaeology also excavated Han Bi Thuong's grave in Quang Ninh and a compound grave in Paster garden (district No. 3, Ho Chi Minh City).

There were 51 reports related to the architecture of imperial palaces, pagodas, temples, cultural relics, churches, houses, wood bridges, burials and fortifications. In Tuyen Quang, researchers found vestiges of a pagoda of the Tran dynasty in Trai Xoan village, Nhu Han commune, Yen Son district.

The Archaeological Institute and Nam Dinh Museum explored the area around Pho Minh pagoda where they found many beautiful building materials, suggesting that there would be other vestiges underground.

The Management Board of historical and

beauty places of Thanh Hoa and the Archaeological Institute were surprised to find the almost perfect remains of Trieu Tuong temple (Ha Trung district) which was once used to worship Trieu to Nguyen Kim and other forefathers of the Nguyen clan dating back to 1803-1804.

Besides those remarkable reports, there were 71 other reports related to pottery, 31 to money, bells, and statues, 56 to epitaphs and notes of promotion, and 31 to other relics.

IV. Champa - Oc Eo archaeology

There were 5 reports related to big excavations.

The Management Board of World Heritage in Quang Nam and the Archaeological Institute excavated an area in My Son, to the east of Khe The stream. There they found stone architectural materials and an abundance of bricks, tube-tiles, leave-shaped tiles, etc., which indicated the potential of underground vestiges in My Son.

The Vietnam Historical Museum and Ninh Thuan Museum excavated Hoa Lai tower and found architectural vestiges dating back to the 8th-18th centuries.

In the Southern part of the country, Ben Tre Museum and the Archaeological Institute carried out the 3rd excavation in Giong Noi relic zone. Results of the excavations showed that this relic zone dated back about 2,000 - 3,500 years. This contributed to the study of pre-Oc Eo archaeology.

The Archaeological research centre of the southern part was involved in the following activities:

- Excavating Phu My relic zone (Lam Dong) dating back to the late Doc Chua period.
- Excavating Thon Mot area (Lam Dong) to find 4 kilns.
- Carrying out the 3rd exploration in Go Tu Tram relic zone (An Giang), which lasted

from the 1st - 2nd centuries BC to the 8th and 9th centuries AD.

- Exploring K9 relic zone (Kien Giang) of the 1st-2nd centuries BC.

- Exploring the areas of Vuong Mieu, Nha Lau and Ben Ma (Bac Lieu), among which Vuong Mieu, which belonged to the Oc Eo culture.

Moreover, there were reports on the explorations of Cao Lan Ha (Quang Binh), the discovery of the new foundation near My Khanh tower, the Cham's ruins in Quang Nam, round earthen buildings and many other single relics.

In conclusion, 2006 was a successful year of Vietnam's archaeology.

The most remarkable achievements last year were as follows:

The Stone Age Archaeology carried out the second big excavation in Kon Tum (Tay Nguyen) with 9 relic zones in Plei Kong hydroelectrical reservoir to clarify many issues related to Tay Nguyen prehistory as well as to meet the requirement of economic development. New explorations and discoveries facilitated further study in Tay Nguyen.

The Metallic Archaeology returned to the relic zones of the first period of the country's construction and paid more attention to technical issues.

The Historical Archaeology focused on manufacturing building materials. Excavations of pagodas and temples met the demand of scientific research as well as their preservation and restoration.

The Champa - Oc Eo Archaeology continued the research of historical places and temples and paid more attention to issues related to pre-Oc Eo period.

In the coming years, Vietnam's archaeology should develop scientific research as well as take heed of the preservation of the nation's heritage, especially the fighting against violations to Laws on Heritage such as stealing antiques or destroying relics.