

REVIEW

LITERATURE REVIEW OF ANCIENT MAPS OF VIETNAM FROM 1896 TO PRESENT

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Abstract

This article reviews the research on ancient maps of Vietnam by domestic and foreign scholars from 1896 to 2022. From the viewpoint of cartography, research during this period focuses on the following issues: (1) cartographical theory, (2) research on the history of ancient Vietnamese maps, (3) bibliography, (4) study of cartographic texts, (5) interpretation and introduction. The conclusion shows that most of the research and discussion focuses on ancient maps, especially the collections of Hồng Đức maps, Thăng Long maps, Hoang Sa maps... The results of these studies form a solid foundation for the promising steps of historical cartography in the future.

Keywords: *cartography, map, geography, ancient*

1. Introduction

Research on ancient Vietnamese maps began relatively early from the late 19th century. In 1896, the French scholar Gustave Dumoutier published a work in French titled *Étude sur un portulan Annamite du XV siècle* (Study on a 15th Century Vietnamese Portolan Chart) (Dumoutier 1896). Based on maps and plans of ancient Hanoi ports from the Hồng Đức map collection, he studied the history and geography of the Thăng Long citadel (15th century), aiming to affirm

Vietnam's importance in the circulation of goods between Southeast Asia, Asia, and the world through Vietnam's ports at that time (Chu Tuyết Lan 2008, 545]. In 2020, this publication was translated and introduced (Dumoutier 2020). This study can be considered the pioneering work that initiated discussions among domestic and foreign scholars on the history of ancient Vietnamese maps.

Within the scope of this review article, from 1896 to 2019, a total of

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around 97 studies on ancient Vietnamese maps by domestic and foreign scholars have been published. Thus, on average, there was slightly more than one scientific publication per year. Researchers of ancient Vietnamese maps published no more than 3 papers in the first 70 years, meaning an average of one study every

20 years. This period is notable for the work "Transcription and Annotation of the Hồng Đức Map Collection" (Vietnam Institute of Archaeology 1962). This was the first work that provided a clear view of the history of Vietnamese maps (Whitmore 1994, 478].

Table 1. Statistic of publication about ancient maps of Vietnam in the period 1896-2019

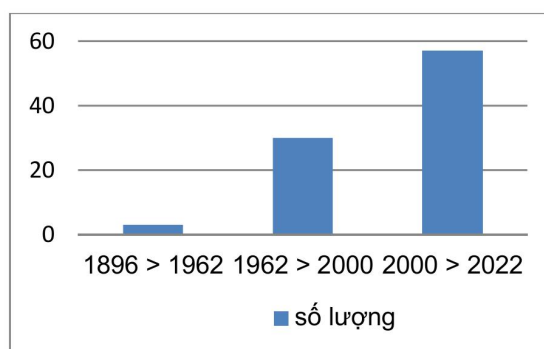
Year	Number	Average
1896 > 1962	3	1 publication/ 20 years
1962 > 2000	30	1 publication/ year
2000 > 2022	67	3 publications/ year

(Own resource, author's review)

In the following 40 years, the number of publications increased significantly with around 30 papers, meaning nearly one paper was published per year on average. This period is notable for the paper "Cartography in Vietnam" (Whitmore

1994). This is the only comprehensive study on the history of maps as well as an overall research on Vietnamese maps to date. From the 2000s until now, around 64 papers have been published, averaging more than 3 scientific publications per year.

Figure 1: Number of publication about ancient maps of Vietnam in the period 1896-2019



(Own data review)

From the content of the research works during this period, we synthesize and classify them into groups for discussion: 1/ Cartographic

theory, 2/ Research on the history of Vietnamese cartography, 3/ Bibliography of ancient Vietnamese maps, 4/ Studies of cartographic texts

in Vietnam, 5/ Translation and introduction works. We will introduce and comment on these papers in the following sections.

2. Theory of cartography

According to current international scholars, geographical awareness is formed based on "imagination/conceptualization", through mass print media (especially the press) under the influence of nation-building policies (Trần Trọng Dương 2017, 65-86). Benedict Anderson is known for proposing this view in his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Benedict 2006). Based on this perspective, Thongchai Winichakul published the book *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Thongchai 1995), in which "geo-body" means that it encompasses the territory of a nation perceived by the citizens of that nation through mapped images/imaginings. This concept differs from and contrasts with the previous concept of maps as geographical space (Trần Trọng Dương 2017, 66). Later, Thongchai's concept of "geo-body" was applied by Momoki Shiro in the paper "Nation and Geo-Body in Early Modern Vietnam: A Preliminary Study through Sources of Geomancy" (Momoki 2010). This paper drew on Vietnamese geomantic sources to demonstrate that these geomantic texts served as a tool for

"imagining/conceptualizing" the geo-body of Vietnam.

In 2016, Liam C. Kelley published a 34-page paper titled "From a Reliant Land to a Kingdom in Asia: Premodern Geographic Knowledge and the Emergence of the Geo-Body in Late Imperial Vietnam" (Kelley 2016). Based on the text *Nam quốc địa dư* by Lương Trú� Đầũ, the author concluded that some Vietnamese geographical books and maps in the late 19th and early 20th centuries reflected new perceptions of Western geographical concepts. Another example he cited was the new geographical terms in the book *Tân đĩnh Nam quốc địa dư giáo khoa*: "Our country is located in the South of Asia, bordering the provinces of Yunnan, Guangxi of China...", the use of new place names such as Asia, China, kilometers (km) shows that the geographical awareness in this book was influenced to some extent by Western knowledge (ibid., 33).

One year later (2017), following the above perspective, Trần Trọng Dương published a paper entitled "Maps and the Creation of Geographical Literacy in Premodern Vietnam through the Confucian Scholar Model and the Way of Nguyễn Huy Quĩnh" (Trần Trọng Dương 2017). This paper discussed the practice of creating geographical literacy in Vietnam in the past through the case of *Quảĩng Thuậĩ đạo sử tập* (QTDST) by Nguyễn Huy Quĩnh. The author argued that the practice of

creating geographical literacy here is understood as recording geography to create historical texts representing the subject's/participant's (literacy factor) perception of a territory or a certain land area [ibid., 73]. On this basis, the author concluded that "QTDEST is a text of literacy creation compiled in the Confucian cultural environment, a product of political practice - ethical practice. Nguyễn Huy Quynh - as a literacy factor, a subject of creation, compiled this work with his literary talent and knowledge as a method of the Confucian scholars on the Way."* It can be said that the concept of creating geographical literacy is the foundation for the author's later publication of papers related to historical geography (Trần Trọng Dương 2018a, 2018b, 2019, 2020).

In general, discussions on cartographic theory have mostly come from foreign authors; moreover, they basically only discuss one aspect, which is the "Geo-Body". In Vietnam, apart from author Trần Trọng Dương, cartographic theory remains a field that has still under researched.

3. Research on the History of Vietnamese Cartography

Cartography in Vietnam is a chapter in Volume 2 of Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies of The History of Cartography series published by the University of Chicago Press in 1994 (Whitmore 1994). Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies discusses issues related to the history of cartography in Southeast and East Asian countries (including Japan, Korea, China, and Vietnam). The book is 970 pages long, with the chapter Cartography in Vietnam spanning 31 pages, authored by John K. Whitmore, an expert on Vietnamese history. † More than half of the paper addresses the maps from the Hồng Đức atlas and attempts to correct misconceptions held by the Institute of Archaeology regarding the dating and authorship of the *Giáp Ngọ niên Bình nam đồ*, as well as Bùi Thiết's views on Lý-Trần era maps (ibid., 492-493). In this paper, many perspectives are examined by the author within their historical context, comparing domestic and foreign views, such as: the author compares the characteristics of citadel

* See further: Trần Trọng Dương 2017, 66-72

† John K. Whitmore did not have a background in geography or ancient cartography, but rather was a researcher interested in various fields such as Vietnamese history, religion, and particularly the politics and thought of the Lê dynasty. The selection of a non-cartography or geography specialist to write about ancient Vietnamese maps is considered the reason why J. Brian and David Woodward invited John K. Whitmore to write about the history of ancient Vietnamese

cartography: "The approach of J. Brian Harley and David Woodward differed from their predecessors; their view was a macro perspective, believing that the history of cartography not only needed to study real-world maps but also encompass global issues, hence they adopted a macro view of cartographic history, and therefore did not need to invite specialized cartographic scholars, instead collaborating with scientists from fields such as history, anthropology, art, and criticism..." (Nguyễn Thanh Tùng 2011, 8-9).

walls in 13-19th-century maps to the Vauban fortresses of France (ibid., 507); or the historical religious perspective is also referenced to explain "The design of Vietnamese maps was fundamentally similar to that of China, developing in parallel with the Confucian model adopted from China in Vietnam during the 15th to 17th centuries" (ibid., 479). The relationship between culture and maps is also discussed by the author in the Thăng Long map: "The irregular and segmented shape of the capital's outskirts by rivers and lakes, the North-South orientation of the Thăng Long citadel following the familiar architectural direction of East Asian culture, outside the walls of Thăng Long is the Bảo Thiên Tower and next to it the Nam Giao altar for worshipping Heaven and Earth as required by Confucian monarchies, where the emperor would conduct rituals in spring, the map also depicts the Bạch Mã Temple, Trấn Vũ Ancestral Hall, and Quốc Tử Giám" (ibid., 484). Unlike previous scholars, the author's approach to ancient maps is to view them through the lens of the relationships between religion, politics, and culture. It can be seen that the scope addressed by the author is broad, with maps as the central focus of study.

However, this work contains many perspectives that require further discussion, such as: The *Tổng quát đồ* is considered by the author to be the earliest surviving map (ibid., 482-483).

The criteria for map classification only focus on maps drawn by Vietnamese, while maps surveyed by foreigners are not mentioned. Limitations in map sources are also a crucial factor leading to some conclusions that need further consideration, for example "The study and mapping of Vietnam only began about 5 centuries ago" (ibid., 478). Furthermore, the paper is largely narrative, with limited commentary and evaluation, and comparisons with map characteristics of other countries in the region are also limited. Additionally, discussions on mapping styles and characteristics are virtually absent. Nevertheless, John K. Whitmore's contribution remains significant in the field of ancient Vietnamese cartography. This is also the most accomplished work on ancient Vietnamese maps to date (Trần Trọng Dương 2017, 73). Later, this work was translated by Hoàng Ứng Huyền and published in the Journal of Research and Development (Whitmore 2019).

4. Bibliography of Ancient Vietnamese Maps

One of the representative studies on cartography during this period is bibliography of maps, with two main authors mentioned in this section: Trần Văn Giáp and Trần Nghĩa. In 1984, Trần Văn Giáp published a book entitled "*Exploring the Han-Nom Book Collection*" (Trần Văn Giáp 1984). The geography section of this book mentions and catalogues the remaining

maps: "1 volume of *Thiên tải nhàn đàm* with 44 maps, 1 volume of *Bản quốc dư đồ* with 48 maps, 1 volume of *Bản quốc dư đồ dự lãm* with 2 maps, and 1 volume of *Bản quốc dư địa đồ lược* with 1 map" (ibid., 317-384). Although these statistics are quite modest, they provided a basis for Trần Nghĩa to supplement in his 1990 paper "Ancient Vietnamese Maps" (Trần Nghĩa 1990). For the first time, ancient Vietnamese maps were catalogued with 49 maps, about 10 times more than Trần Văn Giáp's statistics, and this number reflected to some extent the landscape of Vietnamese maps. Unfortunately, the scope of the paper only covered materials at the Han-Nom Institute's library, without mentioning other libraries in the country. This may have been a suggestion for the deficiencies in later bibliographic studies of maps. In addition to the maps catalogued domestically, Vietnamese maps preserved abroad were also mentioned by some authors, such as: Nguyễn Thị Oanh (1994), (2017); Phan Văn Các (1995); Trần Nghĩa (1999); Trịnh Khắc Mạnh (2011, 2012). Although these catalogues came from general Hán Nôm bibliographies, the number of maps mentioned was not large. Nevertheless, this contributed significantly to increasing the sources of ancient Vietnamese maps.

Bibliography in the 20th century played a certain role in the process of

later research on the history of cartography. The above works made important contributions in providing map sources, laying the groundwork for comprehensive future cartographic research.

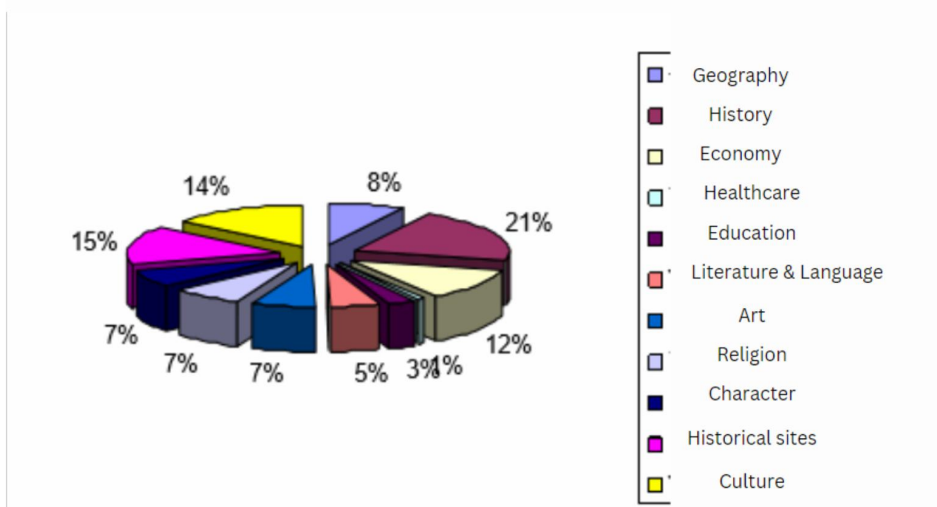
5. Studies of Cartographic Texts

From the content of the papers we have collected related to the study of cartographic texts, it is easy to see that the group of studies on cartographic texts occupies a considerable volume. Moreover, the content of those studies is quite diverse, and will be introduced in turn as follows:

5.1. Thăng Long Maps

Research on issues related to Thăng Long has always been a topic of great interest. According to a 2008 survey, 5,426 research works and articles related to Thăng Long - Hanoi, across all fields, were compiled (Tống Văn Lợi, 2009). Of these, historical works accounted for 21%, and geographical works 8%. It can be seen that a considerable number of these scientific publications used maps as the object of study. This is easily seen in the earliest studies published in the Journal of Historical Research (1959-1960) by Trần Hải Lượng (1959), and Trần Huy Bá (1959)... It can be said that these scientific publications initiated a series of later studies, discussions, and opinions surrounding the location, boundaries, role, and value of the Thăng Long - Hanoi citadel.

Figure 1. Overview of research fields about Hanoi



In the 70s, 80s, and 90s of the 20th century, research on Thăng Long maps became more flourishing. From the study by Nguyễn Khắc Đạm (1975) to the research by Bùi Thiết (1981, 1984a, 1987) in the Journals of Archaeology and the Journal of Social Science Information (Bùi Thiết 1984b). Apart from Bùi Thiết, who was a scholar deeply interested in the Thăng Long citadel, Phạm Hân (1983, 1986) was also a scholar concerned with this issue. In general, although research on Thăng Long maps in the 20th century achieved certain accomplishments, it still had limitations. It is easy to see that this limitation arose from the lack of attention paid to dating of the maps.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the study of Thăng Long maps made certain advancements. This was demonstrated through an exhibition held at the Temple of Literature (Văn Miếu) in November 2002, titled "100-

year Development Cycle". At this exhibition, 78 maps of Hanoi collected by researchers from the Institute of Research on Architecture, Urbanism, and Society of Paris (IPRAUS) were introduced. Besides some maps dating back to the mid-19th century, the majority of the maps (72 documents) were compiled by the French from 1882 to 1954. The success of the exhibition was introduced by Pierre Clement and Nathalie Lancret in the book: *Hanoi - the cycle of changes, architectural forms, and urban* (Clement & Lancret 2003).

A year later, the results of archaeological excavations in Hanoi strongly promoted research activities on Hanoi, with lively discussions taking place on various scientific forums such as: Historical Research, Archaeology, Past & Present, and at the annual Archaeological Conference... For example, at the Workshop on

Researching and Evaluating the Cultural and Historical Values of the Imperial Citadel of Thăng Long, Ngô Đức Thọ (2004) presented a paper analyzing the Hồng Đức maps were drawn in different periods, they were all derived from a map from the Hồng Đức period. Five years later (2008), 17 new maps were introduced in the book *Ancient Maps of Hanoi and its Surrounding Areas*, a product of the exhibition of the same name organized by the French Cultural Center in Hanoi (l'Espace) and the National Library of Vietnam. A year later, Tống Văn Lợi successfully defended his Master's thesis in Vietnamese Studies titled: *The System of Thăng Long - Hanoi Maps in the 15th - 19th centuries*. (2009). This was the first Master's thesis to discuss ancient maps, collecting 47 maps from the 15th - 19th centuries, contributing to the identification of the image of the feudal capital. Through this map system, the author delved into the study of Thăng Long - Hanoi before it was planned to become the present Western-style modern city.

In general, research on Thăng Long maps has achieved certain achievements, but there are still some limitations. Moreover, the map documents are not rich enough, partly because the French-collected maps have just been introduced and exhibited but have not been deeply researched.

5.2. Hoàng Sa Maps

In studies regarding Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoang Sa (Paracel) Islands, researchers often seek evidence from three main sources: (1) Ancient Vietnamese documents; (2) Ancient Chinese documents; and (3) Ancient Western documents.

In 1975, the History and Geography Journal published a book titled "Special Research on Hoang Sa" (Nguyễn Nhã 1975). This was a specialized study, gathering many articles from researchers studying Hoàng Sa. Among them were some articles referring to maps, such as those by Hoàng Xuân Hãn (ibid. 7-18), Trần Văn Kiếm (ibid., 32-40), Lam Giang (ibid., 41-53), Lãng Hồ (ibid., 54-114), and Hãn Nguyên (17, 115-180). Among these, the most notable was the article by Hoàng Xuân Hãn. This article discussed issues related to Hoàng Sa, with many historical documents mentioned, although maps also played a significant part in the article. This article differed from others in this journal, which mainly focused on history or were presented in a narrative style. He concluded that: "Considering these maps, we can be sure that in ancient maps, Đại Trường Sa or Bãi cát vàng all point to the Paracel Islands or Hoang Sa, or Vạn Lý Tràng Sa as referred to by Europeans, known as Parcel or Paracel" (ibid., 10). Trần Văn Quyến (2011, 81-83) published a brief

introduction to the Hồng Đức maps with the code 98846 preserved in the Hiroshima library (Japan), and mentioned the recorded content about Bãi cát vàng *Toản tập Thiên Nam tứ chí lộ đồ thư*. Trần Đức Anh Sơn (2013a, 47-51) also published another article summarizing information about the second Hoàng Sa team recorded in the *Quảng Thuận đạo sử tập*. Five years later, Nguyễn Tuấn Cường, Trần Trọng Dương, and Lê Văn Ất (2018) at the Workshop on Research and Communication of Education on the Hoàng Sa archipelago in the present period introduced briefly the method of recording and illustrating the geographical names of Bãi cát vàng in *Hoàng Lê Cảnh Hưng's* map. Recently, Phạm Thùy Vinh published a multidimensional study on the various versions of the *Khải đồng thuyết ước* in the Hán Nôm Journal (Phạm Hoàng Quân 2014a). The article pointed out that not all documents have map illustrations (including printed and handwritten documents). These research results are perhaps a significant step towards studying the transmission system of Hoàng Sa maps in these documents.

It can be seen that research on Hoàng Sa, focusing on domestic materials, existed mainly in the years before the 20th century and has hardly developed further since then. This is because most existing documents have been thoroughly studied, as evidenced by the work done in the 1980s. The

limitation of map materials, along with the shortcomings of existing ancient maps (Phạm Hoàng Quân 2014b, 64-65], are persistent issues in the field of ancient Vietnamese maps. This is also a prerequisite for new approaches, such as research on Chinese and Western documents.

Representing the trend of exploring Chinese materials, Phạm Hoàng Quân cannot be ignored. He is also one of the few authors who have explored Chinese materials, especially ancient maps. In 2012, he published an article (Phạm Hoàng Quân 2012a, 59-64) referring to the Book of Geographic Records compiled by Chinese scholars to identify a map in this collection, the Guangdong provincial map, which clearly defines Quỳnh Châu (Hainan Island) as the final border of the Chinese mainland. Also in this year (2012), another article was published (Phạm Hoàng Quân 2012b, 65-82) as part of a "Historical Maps of China" compilation, based on administrative map documents of China according to historical processes, discussing issues related to the Southeast Asian sea. Another article, "Regarding the place names and positions of Vạn Lý Trường Sa – Vạn Lý Thạch Dương on Ming Dynasty maritime maps at the Oxford University Library" (Phạm Hoàng Quân 2012c, 106-121), briefly introduces The Selden Map of China along with its style and map characteristics. The

results show that this map was the first to use the terms Vạn Lý Trường Sa – Vạn Lý Thạch Dương and accurately placed coordinates; furthermore, it also pointed out the purpose written on the map was solely to indicate transportation criteria, with no intention of determining sovereignty. In 2014, another work was published (Phạm Hoàng Quân 2014a, 55-77). Based on Chinese materials related to Hoàng Sa and Trường Sa, the author dissected into historical layers: Guangdong provincial administrative maps (10 maps), national administrative maps (2 maps), border maps (2 maps), and military maps (1 map). This systematic method has significant legal implications, completely different from the documents presented by Chinese scholars which were described as "complex overlays, unclearly classified, so although they may be considered historical documents, their scientific value is lacking in reference" (ibid., 77). It can be seen that in Phạm Hoàng Quân's research works, maps are mostly the focus. Issues regarding the characteristics, style, and genres of maps are also addressed by the author. It can be concluded that Phạm Hoàng Quân's contributions not only influence the achievements of Hoàng Sa research but more importantly, the study of ancient Vietnamese maps.

Exploring Western-oriented materials, there are many authors, such as Trần Đức Anh Sơn, Nguyễn

Đình Đầu, Nguyễn Quang Ngọc ... In 2011, the Youth Publishing House published a book titled Historical Evidence and Legal Basis: Vietnam's Sovereignty over Hoàng Sa, Trường Sa (Many authors, 2011). This is a compilation of many articles by various scholars. Among them are two significant discussions on ancient maps, by Nguyễn Đình Đầu (pp. 60 – 69) and Phạm Hoàng Quân (pp. 138 – 149). In 2014, Trần Đức Anh Sơn and a group of authors including Jerome A. Cohen, Jean-Pierrier, Subhash Kapila, Nguyễn Nhã, Nguyễn Quang Ngọc, Gregory Poling, Phạm Hoàng Quân, Shimao Minoru, Tạ Văn Tài, and Carlyle A. Thayer published a book titled: *Hoàng Sa, Trường Sa: Documents and Perspectives of International Scholars* (Trần Đức Anh Sơn 2014a). This book consists of 12 articles by 13 authors, notably the article: "Western Historical Records and Maps Proving Vietnam's Sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Islands" by Trần Đức Anh Sơn (ibid., 9 – 41). This article includes a section on "Western maps proving Vietnam's sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Islands". The author states that more than 140 Western maps drawn and published in the 16th – 19th centuries depict the place names Paracel/Paracels/Pracel/Parcel Islands, and introduces some representative maps among them. Also in the same year (2014), he published an article (Trần Đức Anh Sơn 2014b, 46 - 57; 46 – 53) divided into two parts,

one part published in issue 57, and the other part in issue 58 of the Danang Socio-Economic Development Journal. The main operation of the article is to list maps related to Hoàng based on three sources of data: domestic maps, Western maps, and Chinese maps. Trần Đức Anh Sơn (2014c) basically introduces the Atlas Universel, especially the map *Partie de la Cochinchine* compiled by the founder of the Royal Belgian Geographic Institute. Nguyễn Đình Đầu (2014) published a book compiling his previous publications, as the purpose of the maps is to provide evidence of Vietnam's maritime sovereignty based on domestic and foreign materials, with the map section being relatively substantial. However, this book is mostly narrative, with little discussion and evaluation, and the map illustrations play a dominant role. Nguyễn Quang Minh (2014) published an article providing a brief introduction to the map sheet marked Ge A-395 (captured from Nathalie Lancet). On the other hand, from the place names reflected on the map, the author concludes that this map was drawn between 1876 and 1883. It can be seen that most of the studies exploring Western-oriented map materials, mainly published in 2014, are of a statistical/introductory nature and have not delved into analysis and commentary.

Thus, from the research content mentioned above, it is not difficult to

see that the exploration of map materials for the study of Hoàng Sa is divided into distinct periods. In the 20th century, the existing materials in Vietnam were prioritized and explored by domestic authors. 21st-century research mainly seeks foreign materials, especially Western and Chinese ones. However, studies exploring Chinese materials are predominantly carried out by Phạm Hoàng Quân.

5.3. Other maps

This study focuses mainly on the following maps: Hoàng Đế Bản Đồ, An Nam quốc đồ, An Nam đại quốc họa đồ, Hoàng Hoa sứ trình đồ, and Hoàng Lê Cảnh Hưng map.

Hoàng Đế Bản Đồ (HĐBĐ) is perhaps the most discussed map over the past century. In 1963, Lê Phước published an article (1963, 27-28). The article compared it with a map of the same name published by the Cultural Department of Nam Dinh Province. Two years later (1965, 43), the article "Ending a Misunderstanding" in the Historical Research Journal pointed out that the use of the term "Royal Court" on the Thăng Long map contributed to affirming that this map could not be dated back to 1490 because this term only appeared in 1598.

Regarding the Hồng Đức map, 25 years later (1900), the Vietnam Geography Society organized a commemoration of 500 years of HĐBĐ

(Nguyễn Đình Đầu 2014). The seminar had 21 presentations, with 13 out of 21 * articles discussing the map. Although there were many international scholars attending the conference, there were not many achievements primarily because most of them did not have access to the original text, except Trần Nghĩa. Most other authors mostly surveyed the translation of the Saigon HDBĐ (Trần Trọng Dương 2017, 73). Generally, the discussion about the Hồng Đức map in the 20th century was quite extensive. However, it must be said that many scholars, due to not having access to the text, their works do not have much research value. The remaining few scholars are skeptical about the dating, but no specific evidence has been presented. It was not until 2015 that two Chinese scholars, Hàn Chiêu Kính and Quách Thanh Ba (2015, 203-214), published an article in the Overseas Chinese Studies Journal. The authors said that the term HDBĐ could be understood in two ways: (1) this is a map drawn during the Hồng Đức period; (2) a map compiling the

materials of the Hồng Đức period was completed. Most Vietnamese authors understand the first way, and this is a misunderstanding (ibid., 205). Through the comparison of administrative place names between the imperial decrees, the two authors concluded that the Hồng Đức map A.2499 is a map not drawn in 1490, but drawn around 1651 – 1653 (ibid., 213). It can be seen that this article has a coherent thinking style, scientific viewpoints, however, there are still some points that need further discussion, such as the assertion that the Hồng Đức map was drawn in 1651 – 1653. Please note that HDBĐ A.2499 is not a unique document; let me point out some subsequent versions: HDBĐ with code A.2499 preserved at the Institute of Han-Nom Studies, HDBĐ with code 98846 preserved at Hiroshima University (Japan) (Phạm Hoàng Quân 2012b), HDBĐ of the Cultural Department of Nam Dinh Province collected in 1958 (Tống Văn Lợi 2009), HDBĐ with code Vhc.00885 preserved at the Institute of Han-Nom Studies, HDBĐ with codes 363 and 364,

* 1/ Reading *Dur địa chí*, I think of the Hong Duc map - PTS. Triệu Văn Hiến; 2/ Identifying some values of the Hồng Đức map - PTS. Lê Thế Tiến; 3/ Thiên Hạ map in the 21st year of Hong Duc, predecessors and subsequent generations - Bùi Thiết; 4/ Trying to classify specialized maps in the medieval Vietnamese map system - Dương Hạnh; 5/ Some issues related to the Hong Duc map and the ancient Vietnamese map system - Bùi Thiết; 6/ About some ancient Vietnamese maps of the 16th century - Vũ Phi Hùng; 7/ The luggage of Vietnamese map officials - Lưu Văn Lợi; 8/ Initial understanding of ancient Vietnamese maps - Đình

Văn Nhật; 9/ Vietnamese maps and territorial boundaries from the 15th to the 19th centuries - Phạm Hân; 10/ The value of Thăng Long maps during the Lê dynasty in historical research - Đỗ Văn Ninh; 11/ Ancient Vietnamese maps - Trần Nghĩa; 12/ Signals received from the initial draft of ancient Vietnamese geographical names - Contributing positively to approaching some ancient historical issues; 13/ Discussion on the dating of the map named Hoài Đức phủ toàn đồ 懷德府全圖 - Bùi Thiết.

Tư đạo văn khố (Nguyễn Trí Sơn 2018, 769)... It is not difficult to see that HDBĐ is not unique but has many versions, and A.2499 is just one of the HDBĐ copies drawn in 1490. Therefore, the dating of 1651 – 1653 is not the date of map drawing but should be understood as the date of text copying. Another point that needs further discussion is the misunderstanding of "research materials" when in the conclusion, the author refers to "The Comprehensive Catalog of National Maps (catalog). Based on the information in this "catalog" table: "Thanh Giang Bích Hồ, born in Do Ba, an official of the Công Đạo prefecture," discussing the author's place names, names, and career.

The author concludes that the mapmaker had no social status, which is evident in several points that have been proven (Hàn Chiêu Kính & Quách Thanh Ba 2015, 214). However, it is unclear why the author categorizes this "table of contents" as part of the 13 tuyên maps. According to the arrangement in the A.2499 Hồng Đức map, after the Tuyên maps comes the General map, followed by the "table of contents." It is puzzling why the author does not mention the General map and does not explain why they did not include it with the 13 tuyên maps. Some scholars have suggested that the General map is a kind of appendix to the "table of contents": "The map we temporarily call the General map is a kind of table of contents for the Bản

quốc bản đồ tổng quát mục lục" (ibid., 482 – 483). In fact, upon careful examination, it can be clearly seen that there is a complete separation of content between the documents. The HDBĐ consists of the Central map and the Tuyên maps only; the rest belong to other groups of documents. Perhaps this deficiency has caused certain limitations in scientific understanding. It is hoped that in the future, the HDBĐ will be studied from multiple perspectives with a more diverse range of documents.

Phạm Hân is perhaps one of the names that cannot be overlooked in the studies of ancient Vietnamese maps in the 20th century. From 1983 to 1996, he published about 8 articles related to maps. However, it was only from 1994 that his studies truly delved into ancient maps with his article in the Hán Nôm Journal (Phạm Hân 1994). The article pointed out the erroneous dating in the research work of G. Dumoutier as well as the Saigon Archaeological Institute (ibid., 26). Moreover, historical records reflected in the map prove that this map is dated to 1686. Subsequently, most scholars researching this map have been influenced to some extent by this article. Regarding this map, he published 2 more articles (Phạm Hân 1995, 1996a) in the Hán Nôm Journal. In 1996, he published another article (1996b, 25-27). The article argued that this map is neither the 14th (1833) nor the 19th (1838) Minh Mệnh map, nor is

it excerpted in Phan Huy Chú's *Hoàng Việt dư địa chí*. He believed that there is a map in the Hán Nôm library that is most similar to the *Đại Nam nhất thống toàn đồ* entitled *Nam Bắc Kỳ hội đồ* and concluded that "*Nam Bắc kỳ hội đồ* is dated from 1854 to before 1875. That is also the dating of *Đại Nam nhất thống toàn đồ*" (ibid.).

Alexander de Rhodes is certainly not unfamiliar to the Vietnamese academic community. Since 1996, Nguyễn Đình Đầu (1996, 34-35) has published works related to this map. This article discusses the similarities between the two Hồng Đức maps of 1490 and the Alexandre de Rhodes map in 4 aspects (directions, country names, lines - layout, and territories). However, Alexandre de Rhodes and HDBĐ belong to different categories and genres, the Eastern-style map and the Western-style map, so this comparison is not very meaningful. Later (2006), Harold E. Meinheit published an article in *The Portolan*, the journal of the Washington Map Society (USA), titled "Unveiling Vietnam: The Maps of Alexandre de

Rhodes" (Harold 2006). With 13 pages, the article discusses the context of the missionary apostles as well as the European influence on Vietnam in the 17th century through the maps of Alexandre de Rhodes.

The *An Nam quốc đồ* is a map included in Trịnh Nhượng Tăng's *An Nam đồ thuyết* in the 21st century. This map is known as one of the earliest quantitative maps* of Vietnam. The *An Nam đồ thuyết* has been of interest to scholars for a long time (Bùi Thiết 1981, 1984b). Recently (2016), two Chinese scholars, Vu Hường Đông and Thành Tư Giai, published an article titled "Trịnh Nhượng Tăng's *An Nam đồ thuyết*: A Brief Discussion" (Nguyễn Huy Quỳnh et al. 2018). Although this is a comprehensive article on the *An Nam đồ thuyết* with the most achievements to date, the discussion about the map is limited. It is easy to see that these articles mostly focus on the content, dating, transmission process, or toponymy in the text, but do not discuss much about the cartographic aspects. In the *Journal of Hán Nôm Studies*, Lê Văn Ất (2019), through his

* Maps can be divided into two types: the first type has a scale and abstract map symbols, representing measurable geographical factors on the map, [this type of map] belongs to the analytical tradition of cartography, it is a scientifically quantitative map, "kế lý hoạ phương" (計里畫方) is the method of this type of map. Another type is maps without a defined scale, the symbols on the map are drawing methods, making it difficult to measure the geographical factors represented on the map, [this type of map] belongs to the descriptive tradition of cartography, so it is called a descriptive map, and there are quite a few ancient Chinese maps

belonging to this type." See: Khương Đạo Chương, "论传统中国地图学的特征" (Characteristics of Traditional Chinese Cartography), "自然科学史研究" (Research on the History of Natural Sciences), 1998, Issue 3, p. 265. "Kế lý hoạ phương" (計里畫方) is a traditional quantitative mapping method in Chinese cartography. This method first establishes a certain scale relationship on the map, forming a grid coordinate system, and then can control the position and distance of the elements on the map.

article, began to discuss the textual characteristics of the *An Nam đồ thuyết*, such as: the use of the square grid method as a basis, printing on woodblocks, using colors... Although the article did not discuss or explore the issues in depth, it laid the groundwork for future studies on the *An Nam đồ thuyết*, especially in the study of cartographic symbols.

The *An Nam đại quốc họa đồ* is a map measuring 84 x 45 cm, a supplement to the *Dictionarium latino – anamiticum* (Latin – An Nam Dictionary), published by the Oriental Lith. Press in Calcutta (India) in 1838 (Hàn Chiêu Kính & Quách Thanh Ba 2015). In relation to this map, Nguyễn Đình Đầu (2009) published an article introducing briefly the author, the origin of the map, and conducting a preliminary survey of the administrative system and geographical features on the map. Two years later, American scholar Harold E. Meinheit published an article titled "The Bishop's Map Vietnamese and Western Cartography Converge" (Harold 2016). In his 13-page study, the author, Harold E. Meinheit, comprehensively analyzed and evaluated aspects such as the background of the map, historical context, the process of territorial expansion, and the policies of the Nguyễn dynasty towards neighboring countries (Cambodia and Laos). The author stated that this map is a remarkable achievement in combining traditional administrative maps

(Eastern-style) with Western cartography (ibid., 28). In addition, the purpose of the map is also mentioned and evaluated by the author. The purpose the bishop set when drawing this map was to serve scientific interests. However, for Western missionaries, this was always seen as a tool in their missionary work in Indochina (ibid., 37).

The *Hoàng Hoa sứ trình đồ* was first introduced in 1963 in the "Dictionary of Vietnamese Culture" (Culture Publishing House, Hanoi, 1963). Over 30 years later (1994), this issue continued to receive attention from Trần Hải Yến (1994). Basically, the two articles were descriptions and brief introductions to the map collection. Nguyễn Thanh Tùng (2011), in his article, addressed the *Hoàng Hoa sứ trình đồ* based on two aspects: (1) the compiling process and (2) the transmission process. Eight years later (2018), a workshop of the Nguyễn Huy family was organized (Nguyễn Trí Sơn 2018). In general, these articles discussed issues such as text, authors, compilation time, and relevant text values. In addition to the above text, the Nguyễn Huy family also preserved the QTĐST - a document recording the two regions of Thuan Hoa and Quang Nam. At the Nguyen Huy family workshop (2018), the textual aspects were discussed by Do Thi Bich Tuyen (in Nguyễn Trí Sơn 2018, 60 – 81), from analyzing the content, the author believed that this text partly recorded

and the map were consistent, however, this viewpoint was later refuted by the author group Nguyễn Tuấn Cường and Lê Văn Ất (2019). In 2018, the *Hoàng Hoa sứ trình đồ* and QTĐST were officially introduced to readers (Nguyễn Huy Oánh et al. 2018, Nguyễn Huy Quynh et al. 2018). It can be seen that the publication of these two documents has had some impact on the development of the field of ancient Vietnamese maps. One of the most significant impacts is the noticeable increase in the number of articles during this period. Moreover, with the abundance of sources, it is clear that favorable conditions will be created for research into interdisciplinary textual aspects.

The *Hoàng Lê Cảnh Hưng* map is a map of Vietnam, stored at Keio University, Tokyo, Japan. This document was briefly introduced in the Han Nom Studies 2018 by the author group Nguyễn Tuấn Cường and Lê Văn Ất (2018). A year later (2019), the issue of dating was analyzed by Lê Văn Ất (2019) through each landmark in the article in the Han Nom Journal. In addition, in the same year, the author group Lê Văn Ất and Nguyễn Tuấn Cường (2019) continued to publish articles at the conference "Vietnam's Maritime Gates: Historical Geographic Studies" with the title "The Vietnam Maritime Gate System through the *Hoàng Lê Cảnh Hưng* map". It can be said that the *Hoàng Lê Cảnh Hưng* map has initially perfected issues related to

textual studies. Issues related to map drawing styles and map characteristics are certainly interesting topics that the author group will address in the future.

It can be seen that the research on map documents only exists in certain aspects such as textual studies, dating studies, and transmission processes. Meanwhile, aspects of map drawing methods and map characteristics are rarely mentioned. Moreover, the majority of discussions are about ancient maps, mostly Hồng Đức maps. Meanwhile, modern maps, maritime maps, and feng shui maps are rarely focused on.

6. Translation and Introduction Works

One of the main data that helps us to have a clear picture of the history of Vietnamese maps is the research project on "Hồng Đức Maps", translated and introduced by the author group of the Institute of Archaeology (1962). This is the first research project that mentions the appearance of Vietnamese maps, along with the Hồng Đức map collection, which was introduced to readers for the first time. Although the title of the work is "Transcription and Annotation of the HDBD Collection," its scope is very broad. The beginning of the work addresses issues related to textual studies of maps in the Hồng Đức collection (authors, dates, handwritten copies, translations, and annotations).

This has great significance in laying the groundwork for future studies, especially in discussing about Hồng Đức map. This work is also one of the important foundations that helped John K. Whitmore write about Cartography in Vietnam. However, this work also has some limitations that need to be reconsidered, such as the dating of the maps. Later, part of this Hồng Đức map collection, the TNTCLĐT, was translated and supplemented by Trần Đại Vinh and Trần Việt Ngạc (2014).

Phạm Hoàng Quân (2016) published a translated edition of the "Maritime Map Collection of 1841" at Yale University Library. This map collection consists of records in Chinese documents related to Vietnamese coastal and island locations, which are highly regarded by Western and Chinese scholars, not inferior to The Seiden map of China at Oxford University Library. Chinese academia is very interested in this map, such as Lý Hoàng Kỳ, Trần Quốc Đống, Jonh Wills, Trịnh Vĩnh Thường, Đinh Nhất, Thang Hi Dũng, Stephen Davies, ect. (ibid., 8-11). Later (2019), this map was also translated and published by Trịnh Vĩnh Thường (2019) in Taiwan from the perspective of the Catholic transition from the Ming to the Qing dynasty. A year later, Phạm Hoàng Quân (2017) published another edition of the Siamese national route atlas. This text was originally published in 1996 in Hong Kong. The original was

accompanied by a Siamese map, compiled by the Vietnamese mission (Tống Phước Ngoạn, Phạm Cảnh Giảng), but the map is no longer available. It can be said that this is a valuable document in the field of road and waterway transportation from Vietnam to Siam. In general, Phạm Hoàng Quân's translation works always impress readers with the conversion of historical toponymy. This operation is unprecedented in Vietnam. Converting toponyms is a very difficult task for the cartography industry. Most non-experts can only read the text description on the map without identifying the peripheral description points. Also for this reason, the current map translations often suffer from misreading or misidentification of names. The toponym conversion operation is composed of many factors. Determining direction and method of movement is the premise for determining the map space, classifying languages (Cham, Malay, Khmer, Chinese, Western, Nom names...), combining document reading and more importantly, geographical records (national records, provincial records, and local records), using non-image maps, and field surveys... The research achievements in historical toponymy mentioned above may create new advances in multidimensional/differentiated historical perceptions (Trần Trọng Dương 2018b, 8).

Currently, we have 6 map text documents and 9 published translations. Therefore, the translation and publication of map documents in Vietnam are still very limited; it is because of this shortcoming that it has a certain impact on the development of the field of ancient Vietnamese maps. It is hoped that in the future, with the discovery and widespread publication of new sources, it will create favorable conditions for research on the field of ancient Vietnamese maps.

7. Conclusion

Research on ancient maps of Vietnam from 1896 until now has achieved certain accomplishments, but there are still many limitations. These initial achievements are a solid foundation for future achievements and approaches to cartography. This article only represents the narrow perspective of the author on many aspects of cartography. Attempting to present a research profile of ancient Vietnamese maps is an overwhelming task for the author, so errors are inevitable. Therefore, the author sincerely hopes to receive corrections and contributions from scholars and readers.

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