

THE ORIGINS OF CHAMPA: WAS THERE A KINGDOM OF XI-TU (西屠國) IN THE THU BỒN VALLEY ?

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Abstract: There is a theory that explains the origins of Campā (Champa) by rendering a paradigm in which a kingdom referred to as Xi-Tu emerged in the Thu Bồn valley (a part of Quảng Nam Province today in central Việt Nam) around the 3rd century CE, and then absorbed the Lin-Yi kingdom by the end of the 6th century, resulting in what today is known as Champa. In contrast to this assumption, this paper uses both historical and archeological evidence to show that there was, in fact, no such a kingdom in the Thu Bồn valley in the 6th century. Instead, the evidence shows that from the beginning of the 4th century Lin-Yi conquered many small neighbouring kingdoms, including Xi-Tu (if it in fact existed). Champa, or Campā, was the Sanskrit name used by the ruling class of the Kingdom of Lin-Yi to refer to their territory (Lin-Yi is the name derived from Chinese historical documents).

The discussions concerning the existence of Xi-Tu aim to clarify the nature of the birth of the polity with Indic influences located on the coast of Indochina, known as Champa. Determining the cradle of Champa, once known to be in the territory of Lin- Yi, could lead to a better understanding of the growth of this kingdom, with its unique historical and geographical background. With this in mind, the author would like to share his views on the issue, currently regarded as "a critical point in the historiography of Champa" (Taylor, 2021, 581).

Key words: Chiêm Thành; Thu Bồn valley; Hải Vân pass; Quảng Nam Province; Trà Kiệu; Việt Nam; Campā; Champa; Lin-Yi; Xi-Tu; Ri-Nan; Xiang-Lin; Indochina; Indic influences.

1. Introduction

In Chinese historical documents, the word 國 (simplified as 国, modern pronunciation *Guó*) denotes larger nations as well as small territories whose inhabitants claimed themselves to be independent. 中國 *Zhōng Guó* is China, and is translated literally as "the nation at the centre", implied by Chinese historians as "the most civilised". The peoples of the surrounding countries were considered as 蠻 *mán* or 夷 *yí*, which both roughly mean "barbarian".

The "Thu Bồn valley" is used by Southworth (2001) as a general term for the complex river system situated in today's Quảng Nam Province, and was applied in Schweyer (2010) with the same denotation, "the valley of the Thu Bon River". In such a way, the term is generally understood as the Thu Bồn river basin and refers to the whole of present-day Quảng Nam Province in central Vietnam.

The discussions in this paper relate to the geographical and administrative names used in ancient times. In 111 CE, the Han¹ emperor destroyed the Nan-Yue kingdom of Zhao-Tuo in southern China, and then

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¹The Chinese names of persons, places and book titles are written in Pinyin without the tone marks in this paper.

set up colonial command centers not only on the land of Nan Yue, but beyond its southern border and into today's northern and central Việt Nam. The Jiao-Zhi commandery covered the Red River Delta, the Jiu-Zhen commandery spread from the Mã River valley (Thanh Hóa Province nowadays) to the Ngang Pass (between Hà Tĩnh and Quảng Bình Provinces) and the Ri-Nan commandery was at the southernmost border of Han territory. The boundary of Ri-Nan has been defined differently by twentieth century scholars. Arousseau (1914) located the Ri-Nan commandery at the region from Ngang Pass in the north to the Cap Varella, Đại Lãm Mount in the south (in between today's Phú Yên and Khánh Hòa Provinces). Stein (1947) speculated that the south of Ri-Nan commandery was not far beyond the Hải Vân Pass (in between today Thừa Thiên- Huế and Quảng Nam Provinces).

During the first and second centuries CE there were numerous uprisings of the local populace against the Han Chinese colonial administration. Some of the more notable ones were recorded in the Chinese annals. In 42 CE in the Jiao-Zhi commandery, Lady Trung Trắc led a local army to occupy the commandery's citadel, and proclaimed herself Queen. The Han Court sent General Ma-Yuan to suppress the insurrection. The independence of Jiao-Zhi ended in 43 CE after the death of Lady Trung Trắc (Taylor, 1983, 37- 48). Ma- Yuan is also known for having erected bronze columns on his march to "pacify" the south (Maspero, 1918, 26). Toward the end of the 2nd century, in the Ri-Nan commandery, the people of Xiang-Lin prefecture rebelled and attacked the prefecture office, killed the magistrate, and then established a local chief as their king. The Han Court failed to suppress the rebellion of Xiang-Lin, and recognised them as the kingdom of Lin-Yi.

Archeologists have found the vestiges of residential sites and walled cities or fortresses, mostly at the banks of rivers, in the provinces of central Vietnam. However, it is difficult to date these relics precisely since there is no writing left on the artefacts. Some of the most remarkable of these remains were found in the Thu Bồn valley, including the burial jars found in the vicinity of Hội An, the citadel walls at Trà Kiệu, and the group of temple-towers at Mỹ Sơn. One of the inscriptions in Sanskrit at Mỹ Sơn records the establishment of the temples, and states that they were dedicated to Hindu

deities and sponsored by the kings of the country whose name in Sanskrit is written as चम्पा (*Campā*) or चम्पापुर (*Campāpura*). This inscription includes the year of its dedication, 658 CE (Finot, 1904, 918-925), coded C 96. Some other inscriptions at Mỹ Sơn reveal dates earlier than C 96 ² and others later. All of them verify the existence of a kingdom of *Campā* (Champa) in the Thu Bồn valley by the 7th century, which flourished and evolved in the following centuries into a well-known civilisation in central Việt Nam.

The issue debated among historians and researchers is whether the kingdom referred to as Lin- Yi 林邑 in Chinese sources is the same as the kingdom named चम्पा *Campā* in the Sanskrit inscriptions. The scholars who do not identify Champa with Lin-Yi argue that the territory of Lin-Yi was never in the Thu Bồn valley, and that instead there was a kingdom named Xi-Tu 西屠 developing there between the 3rd and the 7th centuries.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1. Speculation on the existence of a Xi-Tu kingdom

In the elaborate monology titled "Le Lin-Yi, sa localisation, sa contribution à la formation du Champa et ses liens avec la Chine", printed in *Han-Hiue* (Bulletin du Centre d' Etudes Sinologiques de Peking, Vol. II, 1947), R. Stein asserted that the capital of Lin- Yi in the 4th and 5th centuries was at the north of Hải Vân Pass, "dans le région de Huế, probablement en Huế et Quảng Trị et peut être au site de Vãn Xá, sur le Sông Bô, au NW de Huế".³ Stein also identified that the citadel of Lin-Yi's capital, as mentioned in the Chinese sources in relation to an event in 605 CE, was in the Trà Kiệu region of the Thu Bồn valley. However, he did not give a reason for the moving of Lin- Yi's capital, "Qu'est-ce qui a motivé ce déplacement, nous l'ignorons....Les documents font défaut et le problème reste en suspens". Stein only

²The name *Campā* is also known from other inscriptions that have been dated to the 6th century (Finot, 1903, 206- 211; Huber, 1911, 259-260).

³Đào Duy Anh, in his textbook published 1957, showed that Stein was wrong with this statement because of his mis-interpretation of some Chinese words. (Dao, 2005, 508-509).

provided an analysis of Chinese documents which recorded the name of a Xi-Tu kingdom that was supposed to exist to the immediate south of Lin- Yi (Stein, 1947, 107-117).

In the thesis entitled "The origin of Campā in Central Vietnam - A Preliminary Review", W. Southworth (2001) followed the implications made by Stein and came to an affirmative explanation:

"From the very beginnings of Chinese involvement in the South China Sea trade, during the first centuries B.C and first century A.D., the Thu Bon valley had benefited from its commercial in the direct trade route to Nanhai/Quangzhou. With the rapid expansion of this port during the 3 century A.D., this trade had supported the emergence of an independent structure in the Thu Bon valley, under the name of Xitu; and when Quangzhou became the unrivalled centre of the South China Sea trade in the 5th and early 6th centuries A.D., the Thu Bon valley itself became the focus of the most powerful polity in central Vietnam, absorbing the former territory, political traditions, and trading of its northern neighbour, Linyi. It was this economic transcendence that provided the final, commercial context for the origins of Campā in central Vietnam, and for the great epigraphic and sculptural traditions of the 7th and early 8th centuries A.D." (Southworth, 2001, 318).

Schweyer (2010, 106) cited Southworth's speculation in her interpretation of the different styles of early Cham sculpture, "which probably indicate different proto-Cham settlements." Schweyer unhesitatingly gave the label, "king of Xi-Tu", to a king with a Sanskrit name in an inscription found at Mý Son, "A King of Xitu: Bhadravarman. The first inscriptions in Sanskrit and Cham appear at the end of the 5th century in the Thu Bon Valley - the area called Xitu by the Chinese. A king called Bhadravarman was the instigator, but we know little about him. The manner of his accession to royal power is not known but he seems to have come from Funan and proclaimed himself ruler of the Thu Bon Valley."

2.2. Review of the Chinese texts mentioning 西屠 Xi-Tu

Schweyer (2010, 106) wrote: "Xitu is said to be in the lowlands 200km south of Linyi - clearly territory south of the Pass of Clouds or the valley of the Thu Bon River. Set around this centre were a dozen small

kingdoms ("the barbarians of the kingdom of Xi(tu), who claim the kingly title"). Following the list of "kingdoms" about 100km south of Xitu, we find Boliao. This kingdom was situated near the modern town of Tam Ky and the nearby sites of An My or Phu Ninh. Later Chiên Dan and An Thai have yielded interesting archaeological material. More than 300km away is Quduqian, perhaps in the region of Binh Dinh."

The above information was taken from the Chinese book *Tai-Ping-Yu-Lan*, cited by Stein (1947, 116-117), and then re-cited by Southworth (2001, 293). The original text is as follows:⁴

西屠國：《異物志》曰：西屠國在海外，以草漆齒，用白作黑，一染則歷年不復。一號黑齒。《交州以南外國傳》曰：有銅柱表，為漢之南極界，左右十餘小國，悉屬西屠。有夷民，所在二千餘家。

The kingdom of Xi- Tu: The book "Yi-Wu-Zhi" wrote: The kingdom of Xi- Tu was at the sea, (its people) used grass to dye their teeth ... The book "Jiao-Zhou-Yi-Nan-Wai-Guo-Zhuan" wrote: There was the bronze column as sign, showing the southern-most border of Han, at left and right there were more than ten small kingdoms, all subordinate to Xi- Tu. There were barbarians, more than 2000 families were living there.

金鄰國：《異物志》曰：金鄰，一名金陳，去扶南可二千餘里。...。《外國傳》曰：從扶南西去金陳，二千餘里到金陳。

*The kingdom of Jin- Lin: "Yi-Wu-Zhi" wrote: Jin-Lin, also named Jin-Chen, about more than 2000 li apart from Fu-Nan...."Wai - Guo - Zhuan" wrote: From Fu-Nan to Jin-Chen, more than 2000 li arriving at Jin-Chen.*⁵

波遼國：《外國傳》曰：從西圖南去百餘里到波遼，十餘國皆在海邊。

⁴The Chinese texts are quoted from the digital source <https://ctext.org>. A nearly word-for-word translation is provided following the Chinese excerpts.

⁵Li 里 is a traditional Chinese unit of distance, usually about one third of an English mile or half a kilometer.

The kingdom of Bo-Liao: "Wai-Guo-Zhuan" wrote: From the south of Xi-Tu, going more than 100 li to Bo-Liao, more than ten kingdoms all are at the sea shore.

屈都乾國：《外國傳》曰：從波遼國南去，乘船可三千里，到屈都乾國地。有人民可二千餘家，皆曰朱吾縣民，叛居其中。

The kingdom of Qu-Dou-Gan: "Wai-Guo-Zhuan" wrote: From the south of Bo-Liao kingdom, going by boat about 3000 li, arriving the kingdom of Qu-Dou-Gan. There were people, about more than 2000 families, all called themselves people of Zhu-Wu district, resisting, then going to stay there.

Also, Stein and Southworth mentioned the account of Lin-Yi in the book *Tong-Dian*, which says:

林邑国，秦象郡林邑县地。汉为象林县，属日南郡，... 其南，水步道二百餘里，有西屠夷，亦称王焉，马援所植两铜柱，表汉界处也。马援北还，留十餘户于铜柱处。... 林邑国记：“马援树两铜柱于象林南界，与西屠国分汉之南境。

The kingdom of Lin-Yi, in Qin period, is the land of Lin-Yi district, Xiang prefecture. In Han period, being Xiang-Lin district of Ri-Nan prefecture.... Going southward on land or on water, it takes more than 200 li, there are the barbarians Xi-Tu, also declare the king of themselves. Ma-Yuan planted there two bronze columns. Ma-Yuan returned north, left 10 families at the area of the bronze columns. The book "Lin-Yi-Quo-Ji": "Ma-Yuan planted two bronze columns at the southern border of Xiang-Lin, being the dividing line between the southern of Han and the country of Xi-Tu.

It is necessary to note that the book *Tong-Dian* was compiled in the 8th century and that *Tai Ping Yu Lan* was compiled in the 10th century. The extracts presented above show that *Tong-Dian* cites "*Lin-Yi-Quo-Ji*", and that *Tai Ping Yu Lan* uses excerpts from "*Yi-Wu-Zhi*" and "*Jiao-Zhou-Yi-Nan-Wai-Guo-Zhuan*". The references to the planting of the bronze columns are associated with the references to *Xi-Tu*; all of which refer to the time of Ma-Yuan, the Chinese general leading an army to suppress the insurrection of Trung Trác between 42 - 44 CE. The countries of *Xi-Tu*, *Jin-Lin*, *Bō-Liao*, *Qu-Dou-*

Gan, as well as many other countries recorded in *Tai-Ping-Yu-Lan*, are undefined in terms of their periods of emergence and disappearance.

Stein (1947, 161) and Southworth (2001, 292) also cited the *Liang-Shu* (the Book of the Liang dynasty)⁶. In its entry for Lin-Yi, there is a sentence, which states:

其南界，水步道二百餘里，有西國夷亦稱王，馬援植兩銅柱表漢界處也。

At the south [of Lin-Yi], going on land or on water more than 200 li, there are the barbarians of the Xi-Guo (Western country) also claimed themselves as kings. Ma-Yuan planted two bronze columns to signal the border of Han's territory.

Liang-Shu wrote 西國夷 *Xi-Guo-Yi*, not 西屠夷 *Xi-Tu-Yi* or 西屠国 *Xi-Tu-Guo*. R. Stein edited by adding the word *tou* after the word *Xi/Si* and translated it into "the kingdom of Xi-Tu", which conforms to his theory: "A environ 200 li par eau et par terre on trouve les babare du royaume de Si (-t'ou) qui, eux aussi s'arrogant le titre de Roi".

2.3. 西屠 Xi-Tu is the name of a kingdom in Ma-Yuan's time, not the 6th century

In the above excerpts, "the Xi-Tu kingdom" always appears in the context of Ma-Yuan's erection of the bronze columns to mark the southern border of the Han Dynasty's territory, an event that happened between 42 and 44 CE, nearly two centuries before the establishment of the Lin-Yi kingdom.

From other references in the same sources, we know that, at the beginning of the 4th century, king Fan-Wen of Lin-Yi conquered several neighbouring small kingdoms and absorbed them into Lin-Yi.

The *Liang-Shu* recorded the names of the Lin-Yi kings, 逸 *Yi* and 文 *Wen*, and also noted an interesting accomplishment by King *Wen*.

晉成帝咸康三年，逸死，奴文篡立。(…)舉兵攻旁小國，皆吞滅之，有眾四五萬人。

⁶Compiled in the 7th century by Yao-Si-Lian.

In the Xian- Kang third year of the king Jin- Cheng-Di [337 CE], Yi died, a servant named Wen took the throne. (...) Leading the troops to attack the neighbouring small kingdoms, conquering and absorbing all of them, there were about 40.000 to 50.000 people under his charge.

The *Jin Shu* (The Book of Jin dynasty)⁷ provides more details on the accomplishments of *Wen*, the Lin-Yi king, before 347 CE:

於是乃攻大岐界、小岐界、式僕、徐狼、屈都、乾魯、扶單等諸國，并之，有眾四五萬人。遣使通表入貢於帝，其書皆胡字。至永和三年，文率其眾攻陷日南，害太守夏侯覽，殺五六千人，餘奔九真，以覽尸祭天，鏟平西卷縣城，遂據日南。告交州刺史朱蕃，求以日南北鄙橫山為界。

Then attack the kingdoms of Da-Qi-Jie, Xiao-Qi-Jie, Shi-Pu, Xu-Lang, Qu-Dou, Gan-Lu, Fu-Dan⁸, combining all of them, there were about 40.000 to 50.000 people under his charge. Sending envoys and tribute (to the Jin Court), with letter all written in Hu⁹ scripts [Indic scripts]. In the Yong Huo third year [347 CE], Wen led his troops to attack the Ri-Nan commandery, injured the commandery's chief, named Xia-Hou-Lan, killed about 5 to 6 thousand people, the other left for Jiu-Zhen, [Wen] took the Lan 's corpse for a sacrifice to Heaven, destroyed and swept out the fortress of Xi Juan prefecture. Reporting to the Head of Jiao-Zhou, named Zhu-Fan, requesting to regard the northern area of Ri-Nan at the Heng Mountain¹⁰ as the border line.

The above excerpts show that in the 4th century Lin-Yi claimed its kingdom, not only covering the whole commandery of Ri-Nan, but also defeating and annexing several small kingdoms around it, i.e., those to the south and west of Lin-Yi at that time. The Xi-Tu kingdom in the Ma-Yuan's time, if it existed, would have been absorbed by Lin-Yi.

⁷Compiled in the 7th century by Fang- Xuan- Ling.

⁸Stein (1947, 113-114) read into *Qu-Dou-Gan, Lu-Fu-Dan*.

⁹*Hu* was a name adopted by the Chinese for different foreign peoples, including those from India and Central Asia" (Taylor, 1983, 80).

¹⁰The mountain of Ngang Pass, between Hà Tĩnh and Quảng Bình Provinces.

2.4. Did the distinction between Lin- Yi and Xi-Tu become confusing?

After recovering the image of a lost Xi- Tu kingdom and placing it in the Thu Bồn valley in the 6th century, Southworth attempted to resolve the supposed confusion in his reference sources:

"during the course of the 5th and 6th centuries A.D., the earlier distinction between Linyi and Xitu in the Chinese histories gradually becomes confused, and their historical tradition combined" (Southworth, 2001, 303).

It seems inappropriate to criticize the Chinese histories for the confusion in this case. The archeological evidence testifies to the extensive contact of China with the Thu Bồn valley during the early centuries of the first millennium. The roof-end tiles found at the Trà Kiệu site, with human face decoration, are recognized as adopting a motif of Chinese Wu and Western Jin origin (280-316 CE) (Yamagata & Nguyen, 2010). During the trial excavation in 2000 at the Gò Cẩm site, archeologists recovered a number of artefacts revealing the material contact of the area with China, including a high-fired red sherd that has a Chinese "Wuzhu" coin-stamp design, and "a number of fragments of flat-based geometric-stamped Han jars were recovered, very similar to those locally-made ones found at Trà Kiệu and others from Han-period brick tombs in Thanh Hoá Province and at Phú Quốc tombs IA and IB, further north in Vietnam" (Ian & Nguyen, 2011, 69).



Photo (by Nguyễn Kim Dung): A high-fired red sherd has a Chinese "Wuzhu" coin-stamp design, (Ian & Nguyen, 2011, Fig 15)

At the Gò Cẩm site, the fragment of a clay seal was uncovered. The impression of the characters on one side of the seal was transcribed as "Huang-shen shih-che chang 黃紳使者璽" (Seal of the Envoy of the Yellow God). Clay seals were used in order to safeguard the contents of documents or containers during the dynasties of Qin (221 - 206 BCE) and Han (202 BCE - 220 CE) in China and this has been identified as "related to Taoism and shows that people familiar with Chinese ideas lived here." (Yamagata, 2007, 14).

The historical texts of the Chinese dynasties from the end of the Han dynasty (220 CE) to the end of Tang dynasty (907 CE) all contain entries for Lin-Yi and the southern kingdom of Fu-Nan, but have no contemporaneous record of a Xi-Tu kingdom between Lin-Yi and Fu-Nan. It is difficult to surmise that the Chinese historians confused or combined the information, especially in the 5th and early 6th centuries CE, when " *the Thu Bon valley itself became the focus of the most powerful polity in Central Vietnam*".

At the Thu Bồn valley an inscription was found with both Sanskrit and Old Cham language written in Indic script, and dated to the 4th century CE, known as the Đông Yên Châu inscription (Coedès, 1939; Griffiths, 2014). This reminds us of the sentence in *Jin Shu*, quoted above, which states that the king *Wen* of Lin-Yi sent to the Jin Court a letter "all written in Hu scripts". The Hu script of the letter of Lin-Yi sent to the Jin Court and the Hu scripts on the Đông Yên Châu inscription of the 4th century found in the Thu Bồn valley would most likely belong to the same polity as the creator of the inscriptions at Mỹ Sơn in the following centuries.

3. Conclusion

The theory of the presence of a Xi-Tu kingdom at the Thu Bồn valley in the 6th century needs to be re-evaluated in order to avoid generating new misconceptions while excitedly revising the old "historical fiction".¹¹

¹¹Vickery (2011, 377) quoted R. Stein's comment of G. Maspero's *Le Royaume du Champa*: "Maspero has taken the various components [of these texts] and, without any critical comparison, combined them into a continuous story which seems to be backed up by the texts when in fact [this is the case] only for its various elements coming from different sources of

The term "Xi-Tu kingdom" mentioned in some Chinese historical texts refers to an unidentified territory which was probably located in today's central Việt Nam, and was absorbed by the Lin-Yi kingdom in the 4th century as what happened to many of the other territories neighbouring Lin-Yi.¹²

The so-called "Lin-Yi kingdom" has the name Campā in Sanskrit, which was used by its ruling class beginning some time before the 7th century. Lin-Yi and Campā were not two kingdoms located separately in space and time.¹³ These are two names for the same

different dates". Vickery added his own criticism: "That is, Maspero's narrative history of Champa is sometimes historical fiction". The theory of the Xi-Tu kingdom also received strong support from Vickery (2011, 374): "The most thorough new treatment of this subject is in Southworth. He accepts the Chinese textual evidence that the original Linyi was north of Huế and presents a new discovery from the Chinese sources - "one of the great surprises of this thesis", namely "the existence of specific Chinese references to ten kingdoms along the central coast of Vietnam, including the kingdom of Xitu [Sino-Vietnamese Tây Đô] ... the foremost among the independent states located close to Lin-yi", 200 *li* (100–120 km) to the south, which "strongly suggests the placement of this country in the Thu Bồn valley system".

Southworth (2004, 221) no longer used the name Xi-Tu for the Thu Bồn valley; instead he noted an "economic and political power" shifting further south to the Thu Bồn valley: "The kingdom of Linyi had been created from the former Han commandery of Rinan and appears to have inherited both its export trade and its pattern of border conflict with the Chinese-controlled territories to the north. Its geographical area was probably limited to the narrow stretch of coastline between the Ngang and Hai Van passes. After the destruction of 446, however, this focus changed, with economic and political power shifting further to the south, in particular to the Thu Bon valley of modern Quang Nam".

¹²Other arguments providing a basis for doubt in the Xitu-Campā identification were given by Zakharov (2019).

¹³Zakharov (2019) still affirms that "Cāmpa and Linyi always were two different kingdoms", basing this on the uncertainty and impossibility of identifying "the rulers of Linyi from Chinese and Vietnamese records with Champa kings known from epigraphy". However, it should be noted that the way of recording the names of the indigenous persons in Sanskrit inscriptions and Chinese texts is too different to be appropriately compared.

polity, but these designations were not generated at the same time, by the same tradition. While the Chinese "Lin-Yi" was later replaced with other names such as "Huan Wang" and "Zhan Cheng" in accordance with the changing view of the kingdom from the perspective of early Chinese dynastic historians, the self-ascribed Sanskrit name "Campā" survived the ups and downs of history.

Champa was a polity that emerged with the background of a rebellion of the local inhabitants against the domination of the Chinese Han Dynasty in Ri-Nan prefecture. The nature of the birth of this polity inclined itself toward being 'alien' to China and that is part of its cultural and political structures. This led them to take advantage of their geographic and other connections to the communities which had previously been associated with Indic influences. The territory of the so-called Ri-Nan, then Lin-Yi, with their passes over the western mountains to the plateaus of what are today southern Laos, northern Cambodia and Thailand, served as a cradle for the growth of Champa after the 7th century.¹⁴

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KHỞI ĐẦU CỦA CHAMPA: CÓ MỘT VƯƠNG QUỐC TÂY ĐỒ ((西屠國) Ở THUNG LŨNG SÔNG THU BỒN KHÔNG?

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Tóm tắt: Có một giả thuyết về nguồn gốc của Champa (Campā) cho rằng vào khoảng thế kỷ 3 sau công nguyên có một vương quốc Tây Đồ ở vùng thung lũng sông Thu Bồn (tỉnh Quảng Nam ngày nay); đến cuối thế kỷ 6, vương quốc này đã thu phục vương quốc Lâm Ấp và làm nên vương quốc Champa. Ngược lại, dựa trên các chứng cứ khảo cổ học và lịch sử, bài viết này cho rằng không hề có một vương quốc Tây Đồ ở thung lũng Thu Bồn vào thế kỷ 6. Các tư liệu cho biết từ đầu thế kỷ 4, Lâm Ấp đã thu phục nhiều vương quốc lân cận, trong đó có thể có cả Tây Đồ. Champa, hoặc Campā, là một danh xưng tiếng Sanskrit được tầng lớp cai trị của Lâm Ấp sử dụng để đặt tên cho đất nước của họ (Lâm Ấp là tên gọi được ghi trong các tài liệu lịch sử của Trung Hoa).

Thảo luận về sự tồn tại của Tây Đồ là nhằm làm rõ về sự ra đời của một chính thể chịu ảnh hưởng Ấn Độ ở vùng ven biển Đông Dương, được biết đến với tên gọi Champa. Xác định cái nôi ra đời của Champa là vùng lãnh thổ từng được gọi là Lâm Ấp sẽ góp phần hiểu rõ hơn về sự phát triển của vương quốc Champa trong bối cảnh địa lý và lịch sử đặc thù của nó. Với cách hiểu này, tác giả mong muốn chia sẻ ý kiến về một vấn đề hiện được xem là "một điểm then chốt trong sử học về Champa" (Taylor, 2021, 581).

Từ khóa: Chiêm Thành; Thu Bồn valley; đèo Hải Vân; tỉnh Quảng Nam; Trà Kiệu; Việt Nam; Campā; Champa; Lin-Yi; Xi-Tu; Ri-Nan; Xiang-Lin; Indochina; chịu ảnh hưởng từ Ấn Độ.