

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF THE FORMER LINYI IN THE PROVINCES OF QUẢNG TRỊ AND THỪA THIÊN - HUẾ



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The Changing Landscape of the Former Linyi in the Provinces of Quảng Trị and Thừa Thiên-Huế*

Li Tana

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to add to the field of Cham studies by exploring Champa's early historical landscape. It focus on the lesser-known and less understood history of Linyi, a kingdom that was to become part of northern Champa from the seventh century onward. The rationale for this paper is simple: we know something about southern localities such as Trà Kiệu, Mỹ Sơn, Vijaya (Quy Nhơn) and Phan Rang, but less about the northern localities of present-day Quảng Trị and the Thừa Thiên-Huế area. At the same time, while we know something about Cham maritime history, we know little about how its coast and rivers were connected and how they changed over time, and whether such changes in landscape impacted on Champa's maritime fortune in any way. This northern region will be the focus of this working paper.

I will begin with the fragrant forest of Linyi of the fifth century, highlighting the importance of trade in aromatic plants to Linyi's rise. I then move to examine Linyi's territorial integration and the basis for its prosperity. There seem to be two major features of Linyi territory: first, although Champa occupied one of 'the least coherent territories in the world', as Gourou (1955: 3) put it, its northern part of the territory (Linyi) appears to have been better connected than the rest of Champa's nagaris (principalities) with a crucial river-lagoon system running across its heartland. Linyi was well integrated with rich resources all around, and this formed the foundation of Linyi's prosperity. The second feature, equally important to our understanding, is that this foundation is changeable. Geographical factors that formed Linyi—the high mountains, short rivers on sloping terrain and frequent typhoon attacks—contributed to an ever-altering coastline, which might have impacted the fortune of Linyi, more so than its counterpart in the Red River delta. These factors are illustrated vividly in the contemporary Thừa Thiên-Huế area, the former core of Linyi during the first millennium CE, which in its now-dim past must have experienced multiple cycles of construction, destruction, abandonment by settlers, and reconstruction.

LINYI, THE NODE OF MARITIME TRADE OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

IF WE WERE TO CHOOSE but one prince of the maritime world of the South China Sea before the seventh century CE, it would be Linyi 林邑. It was 'THE harbour and THE path of all countries' (众国津途), as the fifth-century source *Linyi ji* (*Accounts of Linyi*) solemnly declares.¹ Linyi was founded on the former territory of the Han Empire's southmost province Rinan 日南 ('South of the Sun') in the second century CE.² Chinese sources thus often use these two names interchangeably, particularly when referring to the land and its re-

* I wish to thank Dr. Anne-Valérie Schwyer for sharing her GIS project on this region with me, and Dr. William Southworth for his works on Linyi and personal advices to me. This paper is inspired by their illuminating works. I am grateful to Prof. Craig Lockhart for his critical reading of the earlier draft, which largely reshaped the current paper.

1 This earlier source was the *Shuijingzhu* 水经注 (*Commentary on waterways*), *juan* 36.

2 On the terms Rinan and Linyi, see Southworth (2001:280–290).

sources. Exotic items from Cambodia, Java, India and beyond brought into China were repeatedly recorded as arriving via Rinan, among which there were merchants who claimed to be the envoys of Roman King Antoninus Pius in 166 CE.³ When two Chinese officers were sent to visit over one hundred principalities in the South Sea in 243 CE, they departed from Linyi, and noted that its port Lurong 卢容 (see below) ‘is often the gate where [people] departed for Funan and the countries beyond’.⁴ ‘THE harbour and THE path of all countries’ indicates that Linyi offered multiple pathways to trade, by the land and by the sea. Linyi was best placed to link the trans-Mekong networks of Mainland Southeast Asia with the coast of the South China Sea. The easiest and most important trading route of all the Annamite Range (Trường Sơn) ran through the Ai Lao Pass (west of Quảng Trị near the Lao border), through which goods pass from the Mekong River region into the very heartland of Linyi in Quảng Trị and then to the sea. Four most important Early Metal Age complexes are found in this region, all of them are near the Thạch Hãn River and its tributaries, according to Reinecke et al. (1999:61). This route (now Vietnam’s no. 9 national highway) links the Early Metal Age centres in the Khorat plateau such as Ban Chiang with the coast and, in such a way, as Reinecke et al point out, for the communities in Bình Trị Thiên, this trade route in the west was as important as the contact with the Đông Sơn culture in the north. (Reinecke et al 1999:61). This route is still the key access that Laos has to the ocean. Linyi was important because it brought together the sea and the mountains, and this was what Linyi’s prosperity rested upon.

LINYI, THE FOREST CITY

Historically, ‘forest’ was the key word to describe this area. Linyi’s northern city Oli (Ulik) (aka ‘Qusu’, see below) was described as ‘next to the mountains, ... where thick forests reach to the clouds; mist rises among and above them’.⁵ The capital of Linyi of the fifth century was also surrounded by thick forest:

Outside the citadel [of Linyi] there are immense wild forests in dark green colour with trees of different heights, all pointing to the sky with rattans coiled between them. There is a forest of aromatic trees, [so many of them that] it scented the air.⁶

By some time between the third and fourth centuries CE, the Chinese began to view the forests of the southern kingdoms as a source of fascination and wealth. This view, in addition to a newfound knowledge of aromatics from the southern forests, is evident in condensed form in the *Baopuzi* by Ge Hong (284–364 CE):

Aromatic woods have different origins. Sinking and floating eaglewoods are produced in Rinan; green coloured *duliang* is from Dunxun (Tenasserim); fragrant clove is from

3 In 84 CE, Jiubushi (Cambodia) sent rhinoceroses and white pheasants via Rinan; in 131 CE, the king of Yediao (Java) sent envoys via Rinan; in 157 and 159 CE, Tianzhu (India) repeatedly sent envoys via Rinan. See *Houhanshu: xinanyi zhuan* 后汉书·西南夷传, j.86. In 166 CE, the king of Daqin (Roman king Antoninus Pius) sent ivory, rhinoceros horns and hawkbill via Rinan. *Houhanshu: xiyu zhuan*, 后汉书·西域传 j.78.

4 Kang Tai, *Funanji* [Accounts of Funan], cited in *Shuijingzhu*, j.36.

5 *Shuijingzhu* 水经注·温水: ‘负郭接山, 榛棘蒲薄, 腾林拂云, 幽烟冥緜, 非生人所安.’

6 *Shuijingzhu* 水经注·温水: ‘其城隍塹之外, 林棘荒蔓, 榛梗冥鬱, 藤盤篁秀, 參錯際天。其中香桂成林, 氣清煙澄’.

Dubo (Java); . . . punchuk is from Tianzhu (India) . . . All of them are from trees and plants, and all are precious. They are either in the form of flower or gum, [and are found] either in the heart or in the branches of trees.⁷

Descriptions of Linyi in Chinese literature epitomize fourth-century Chinese fantasies about the southern forest—misty, mysterious, yet at the same time potentially lucrative. By this time, the word ‘forest’ dominates discussions of Linyi; indeed, writers celebrate it. For example, a fifth-century source entitled *Shuyiji* (*Accounts of curiosities*) states: ‘In Rinan [Linyi] there is an aromatic forest. It expands to an area of 1000 *mu* (1 *mu* = 0.16 acre), where famous and fine aromatics are found’.⁸ When the above mountains are plotted on the map of aromatics-producing areas, it is clear that both cities—Oli and the capital of Linyi—were located next to or among mountains containing aromatic woods. This means that Linyi’s two historical power bases, both the one near Đồng Hới and the one near Văn Xá, lay close to sources of aromatics. A clearer picture emerges when a third source is added to the analysis: ‘There is an aromatics market in Rinan, where merchants from afar come buying and selling aromatics’.⁹ Together, these sources provide two important pieces of information: that the aromatic forest was a vast area, and that this forest was near the capital of Linyi.

Aromatics trades with China would have formed an important foundation for Linyi’s prosperity. It was rich in wealth and powerful at sea. In 430, Linyi sent over 200 big ships to loot Jiuzhen (Thanh Hóa). These ships were described as *louchuan*, the largest kind of ship in the Gulf of Tongking at that time. A *louchuan* had several decks and carried soldiers between few dozens and few hundreds in number. In 446 CE, when Linyi was facing the danger of being invaded by Sui troops, the king of Linyi offered to pay 10,000 *ji* (1 *jin* = 500 grams, 5 tons) of gold, 100,000 *jin* (50 tons) of silver and 300,000 *jin* (150 tons) of copper in return for peace. The negotiation broke down. The invaders carried with them countless treasures away; ‘all had been unseen and unheard of before’. Tens of thousands of *jins* of gold alone were looted, after ruining the 18 gold statues of the country.¹⁰

Sources mentioning an aromatic forest next to the capital might not be referring to the same location, however. While the Linyi City of 358–359 CE might be near Đồng Hới, the same ‘capital’ of Linyi in 446 would have been located in Văn Xá. This was because both the names of ‘Linyi’ and ‘Rinan’ referred to a constantly shifting geographical terrain contracting and expanding between the second century and sixth century CE. The geographical entity named ‘Rinan’ in 100 BCE includes an area located at 16°N, that is, as far south as Quảng Nam. In contrast, the geographical entity with the same name in the

7 众香杂类，各自有原。木之沈浮，出于日南。都梁青灵，出于典逊。鸡舌芬萝，生于杜薄。[...]青木天竺[...]咸自草木，各自所珍，或华或胶，或心或枝。 *Taiqing jingye shendanjing* 太清金液神丹经 [Grand Clarity Scripture of Golden Liquids and Divine Elixir], vol.3; <https://zh.wikisource.org/zh-hans/太清金液神丹經#太清金液神丹經卷下>.

8 ‘日南郡有千亩香林，名香出其中’. Li Fang et al. 李昉等, *Taiping guangji* 太平广记 [Tales from Records of the Taiping Era], j.414, ‘Fauna’ 9. Although this is a source of the tenth century CE, it quoted from Liang Renfang’s *Shuyiji* [Accounts of curiosities], written in the fifth century.

9 ‘日南郡有香市商人交易诸香处’. *Taiping yulan* 太平御览 [Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era], j.981, <https://zh.wikisource.org/zh-hant/太平御覽/0981>.

10 *Nanqi shu* 南齐书 [History of the Southern Qi dynasty] j.58; *Suishu: Linyi liezhuan* 隋书·林邑列传 [History of the Sui dynasty: Biographies of Linyin], j.82; *Songshu* 宋书 [History of the Southern Song dynasty], j.63, ‘沈演之传’.

seventh to ninth century lay two parallels north of that, at 18°N, in the area of today's Hà Tĩnh province. In between, Chinese troops had few upper hands over Linyi, forcing the latter to move the capital southward but not changing the territory fundamentally.¹¹ This is because, for 200 years between the mid-third and fifth centuries, the powerful Linyi kingdom pushed its northern border with the Chinese empire's Jiaozhi province further and further north, as its foe continually tried to push it back. Their seesawing battles repeatedly shifted the border between them. However, as they shifted, they brought the old harbour names with them, shifting the names to suit each new geographical context. The names 'Rinan' and 'Linyi' were often used interchangeably in early Chinese sources when mentioning local products, even when Linyi became independent in the second century.¹²

The two cities of Linyi were spectacular. The 13 gates of the kingdom's northern city of Oli (Qusu) faced rivers on both its northern and southern edges. The walls of the citadel consisted of a packed-earth base rising some seven meters in height topped by a brick wall three meters high and, above that, a wooden structure or bamboo palisade of up to five tiers and 12–24 meters in height. Through the 13 gates, people could gain access to the inner city, which contained 2100 houses; outside, the city walls were surrounded by houses and markets. Linyi's southern city, the capital, measured four kilometres in diameter and contained fifty separate living quarters, including eight temples and pagodas, a tiled palace, and densely packed housing.¹³ In these descriptions, the urban character of the settlements is readily apparent, as Paul Wheatley (1983:384) pointed out. In fifth-century Chinese eyes, the cities were densely populated, enigmatic, and strangely fantastic.¹⁴ Their reports of hundreds of big ships, multi-storeyed tall buildings in numerous citadels, together with tons of gold, silver and copper, all suggest the enormous wealth of this principality.

Harbours and river mouths were crucial to Linyi's existence and prosperity. In Linyi, the harbour mentioned the most was called Lurong 卢容. It appears prominently in the third century CE, when two officers of the Wu court, Zhu Ying and Kang Tai, embarked on a voyage to countries of the South Sea in 243.¹⁵ This was also where Jiaozhi's navy fought against Linyi king Fan Wen in 349.¹⁶ Vietnamese historians Đặng Xuân Bảng and Đào Duy Anh both located this harbour at Tứ Hiền south of Huế (Đào Duy Anh 2006: 55). They did this through a study of toponymy: Lurong (third–fifth century), Ô Long (thirteenth century), Tứ Dung (fifteenth century), Tứ Khách (sixteenth century), Tứ Hiền (seventeenth century). The question is, how do we know whether today's Tứ Hiền is located in the same place as the old port Lurong?

Anyone who looks at the map of Huế and sees the present location of Tứ Hiền Harbour will be struck by its distance from Huế. All of the cultural sites and political centres associated with this historical period are located to the north, 50 to 100 kilometres away. Cham ruins (temples and pagodas) are spread on the plain between the north of Huế and Quảng Trị, rather than the south near Tứ Hiền harbour, as shown on map 1 below.¹⁷

11 See Đào Duy Anh, *Đất nước Việt Nam qua các đời*, pp. 69–70.

12 Southworth 2001:271–275; 2015. I am grateful to Dr. Southworth for sharing his insights.

13 *Shuijingzhu*, j.36. Here I used the translation by William A. Southworth (2004:220–221).

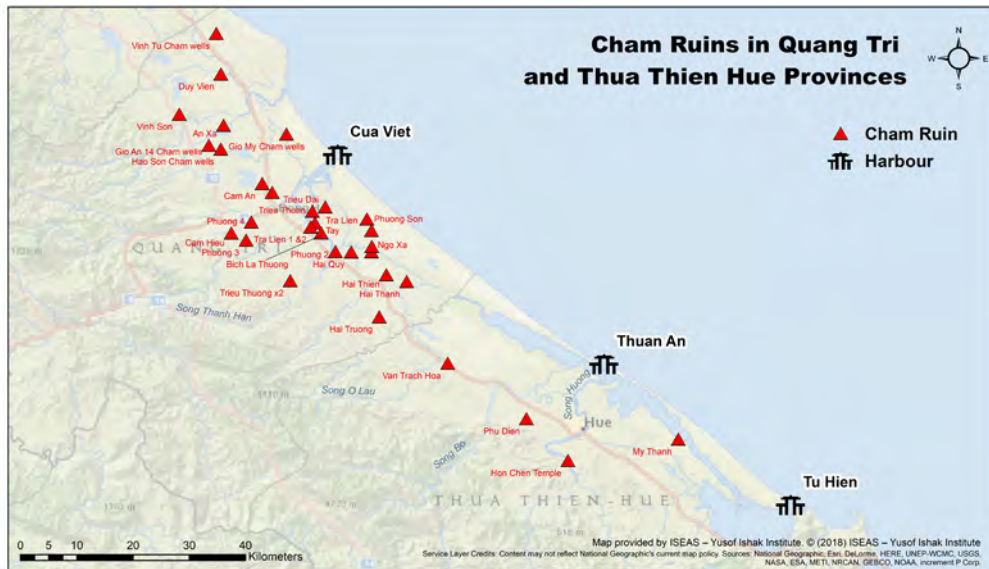
14 *Jinshu* 晋书 [A history of the Jin dynasty], j.97, 'An account of Linyi'.

15 Kang Tai, *Funanji* [Accounts of Funan], cited in *Shuijingzhu*, j.36.

16 *Jinshu* 晋书, j.97, 'An Account of Linyi'.

17 For the Cham ruins in Quảng Trị: 'Dí tích Chăm tại Quảng Trị', <https://www.facebook.com/pg/>

Map 1: Cham ruins in Quảng Trị and Thừa Thiên Huế provinces. Source: map by Pearlyn Pang, copyright of the ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.



Map 2 on page 9 shows the Cham citadels and Nguyễn capital towns. It is remarkable that the Cham towns and Viet towns are so close to each other that they seemed to be built around the two clusters, i.e. Thuận Châu and Hóa Châu under the Vietnamese, or the Ô and Ly of the Chams. Like the Cham ruins shown on the map above, all of them are located to the north of Huế, and Tư Hiền again sits at the lower end of the map, tucked into the south-eastern corner of Thừa Thiên-Huế.

It is clear from the above-mentioned maps that neither the Linyi ruins nor Nguyễn capitals were anywhere near the current location of the Tư Hiền harbour. All of them are located on the *north* of the Perfume River, while Tư Hiền Harbour lies about 50 kilometres *south* of the Perfume River. It is hard to see the current Tư Hiền as a convenient harbour, whose alleged predecessor Lurong played a central role over the last 2000 years. If Tư Hiền was indeed the Lurong/Ô Long of ancient fame, something significant must have happened to the location of the old Lurong port in the last 1500 years or so. This is where I started my research.

A SHIFTING COAST

Two Cham ruins in Mỹ Khánh village, Phú Vang district, Thừa Thiên-Huế, strike us as relevant. Though 1200 years apart from each other, both constructions represent considerable human effort, yet both collapsed in the face of natural devastations. One is a Cham tower, now buried five meters under sand, situated on the seashore south of the Thuận An harbour. It is dated to the beginning of the eighth century CE, believed to be the oldest existing Cham tower (see Fig. 1).¹⁸

CHAMPA-AND-ME-245177003398/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10151791209953399.

¹⁸ The picture shows the protection structure that was built on the ruins after its discovery in 2001 (Photo by Nguyễn Văn Quảng, 2011). Because it is five meters underground, it is under the constant threat

Fig. 1: The Mỹ Khánh ruin, Phú Vang district, Thừa Thiên-Huế (photo by Nguyễn Văn Quảng)



Fig 2: Contemporary ruins in the north of Thuận An harbour (photo adapted from Ngu Nguyen Huu and Non Duong Quoc 2015)



of any big rain, according to the local scholars. Human actions cause further damage: local people have reportedly dug the sand next to the ruins for medicine, since it is a sacred site. <http://vietlandmarks.com/module/groups/action/viewlink/u/403%253A6ba25faobo781c1614e7f3ea81463b7d>

Fig. 2 shows a group of ruins in the sands north of Thuận An harbour. This set of ruins consists of a cluster of solidly built and relatively new houses abandoned in the 2010s when the occupants of about 600 households, facing soil erosion, had to vacate their homes and resettle elsewhere (Ngundmd Non 2015).

What we have captured here are but two of many cycles of build-collapse-rebuild around a harbour, which would have happened numerous times on this coast over thousands of years. What the pictures cannot show is that harbours themselves often change too: they close, reopen and often shift their locations, so much so that a Vietnamese geologist comments: ‘the opening, closing, and sudden locational shift of harbours is a natural disaster concern in central Vietnam, among which the Thừa Thiên-Huế area is the most typical.’ (Trần 1997:185, 194). The following remarks are inspired by this mirage of seeing the coast of this area as shifting and imminent. Such an environmental feature impacted or maybe even determined the fortune of the polities resting on this land.

‘OLI’, ‘Ô’ AND ‘LÝ’, AND THE RIVER SYSTEMS CONNECTING HUẾ AND QUẢNG TRỊ AREA

In 1155 CE, the Northern Song maritime custom officers in Guangzhou received a Cham ship richly loaded with aromatic woods, among which there were 55,020 *jin* (33 tonnes) of ‘Oli aromatics’ 乌里香.¹⁹ This was not the first time that Chinese sources had mentioned Ulik, the northern Linyi region, although the spelling (乌里 Wuli, Uli) has slightly changed.

Ulik’s earlier written form was no other than 區栗, mentioned numerous times in the fourth century source *Shuijingzhu* 水经注 and throughout the Chinese chronicles to the fifth century. In the early twentieth century, historians made a serious mistake interpreting the name 區栗 in Chinese script, and this misinterpretation persists to this day. The first character, 區, has two pronunciations, Ou and Qu (Ô and Khu in Vietnamese). When it refers to a name it is read as Ou, as in the case of 區栗. Oli is thus a close approximation of the local name Ulik. When the *Shuijingzhu* was copied, the second character 栗, pronounced *li*, was mistakenly written as 粟, pronounced *su*.²⁰ French scholars thus read the characters 區栗 as ‘kiu’-sou’ (Qusu) in Chinese and ‘Khu Túc’ in Vietnamese (Stein 1947:1–8). Both characters were thus romanised erroneously. ‘Qusu’ is a far cry from the phonetics of the city’s name, Ulik, as pronounced in its original language. This mistake made the history of northern Champa even more confusing than it already is. Worst of all, it effectively disassociated the city from the region in which it was located. If, as the *Shuijingzhu* recorded, Oli was a city, then it would have been located in a region that was called by the same name, as the reference to Oli aromatics reveals above.

What does the story of this name ‘Oli’ tell us? First, it hints at the oneness of the region called Oli, or O and Li, as it was presented to the Viet court in the fourteenth century. Although Champa is understood as ‘island-clusters’ (Taylor 1999:154)—where there is no river running in the east-west direction linking the land by the rivers, the Oli region seems to have been an exception.²¹ Unlike other Cham regions particularly Phú Yên in

19 ‘乌里香55020斤’, *Song Huiyao jigao* 宋会要辑稿 [The compilation of state regulations in the Song dynasty], ‘Fanyi’ 蕃夷7; Momoki (2011:131). ‘Oli aromatics’, seemed to refer to the mixed lower-quality aromatics that came from the Ulik region.

20 *Nanqishu* 南齐书 [History of the Southern Qi dynasty] keeps the correct form of 區栗. See j:58: ‘區栗城建八尺表’.

21 In a personal correspondence, dated 15 November 2018, Southworth pointed out to me that even the

the south, where Cham enclaves are separated by the mountains that open to the sea individually, no such mountain separates today's Quảng Trị and Thừa Thiên-Huế regions, the former land of Oli. Instead, we see a stretch of coastal land comprising several small plains, and that, for most of the region's history, was connected by an internal water system, as will be shown below.

The most important river in the Oli region was the Bồ River. The Bồ River delta is one of the three small deltas in Thừa Thiên-Huế province, a place with a long history of settlement. On this old delta lie traces of many paleo-rivers of different sizes, plus oxbow lakes and abandoned canals, all of them signs of intensive human activities.²² With its origin in Laos, the Bồ river was large enough to travel by boat, linking the salt-making sites with the mountainous areas.²³ The two mountains here produced aromatic woods.²⁴ There is a good reason for Rolf Stein to suggest that Linyi's fourth-century capital was in Văn Xá, which lies on the Bồ River, 15 kilometres northwest of Huế, rather than around Huế itself (Stein 1947:108).²⁵ The Perfume River, or Sông Hương, was not mentioned in the fifteenth century Ming gazette. In this source, the top river for the Red River delta was the Cái (Red river), while for the Thừa Thiên-Huế area it was the Bồ.²⁶

It was on the Bồ river that the Hóa Châu citadel was built, first by the Chams in the ninth/early tenth century, and later by the Trần dynasty in the thirteenth century. Japanese archaeologist Nishimura and Vietnamese scholars excavated this site between 2007 and 2012 and found abundant Cham artefacts in the north of the citadel—the residential area throughout the Cham era and the Trần period (Trường 2017:84). The northern side of the citadel was the Bồ River. It was still the dominant river in the sixteenth century, on which a big bridge was built, called the 'Number One Bridge of the Ô Châu' (Ô Châu cận lục 2009:44a). On the southern side of the citadel was the 'Kim Trà River', which is the Perfume River we know today. It was not listed under the entry of 'Big Rivers' of the region, as was the Bồ River (*ibid.*:12a–12b).

North of the Bồ River lies the Ô Lâu River. Local scholars say that the name 'Ô' as in 'Oli' was named after this river. On the Ô Lâu River plain we find Văn Trạch Hòa, a cluster of Cham temples dated between the late ninth and early tenth centuries (Parmentier 1919:1–114). All its main structures collapsed, but the base and footings of the main offering altar allow us to imagine the scale and sophistication of temples built a millennium

rest of Champa is not exactly land-clusters except for 'the province of Phú Yên, which really is enclosed by high mountain ranges to the north and south. In the case of Quảng Nam, Quảng Ngãi and Bình Định there is no real physical impediment between them, only the occasional long stretch of arid ground. The same is true of Khánh Hòa, Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận, which are separated by mountain spurs, but only to the extent of narrowing the routes between them rather than blocking them entirely'. I am grateful to Dr. Southworth for sharing his insight.

22 *Dư Địa Chí Thừa Thiên Huế* [Gazette Thừa Thiên Huế], <https://www.thuathienhue.gov.vn/vi-vn/Du-dia-chi>

23 *Ngan-nan tche yuan*, p. 56; Ô Châu Cận Lục 2009:59b.

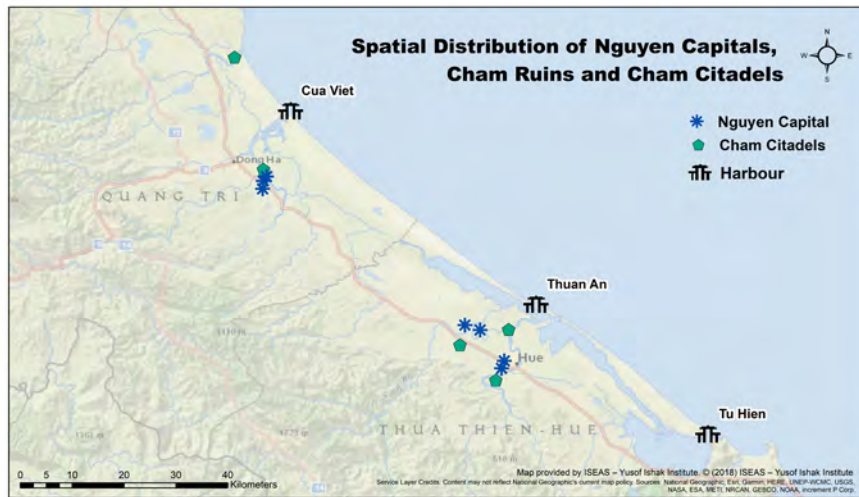
24 *Ngan-nan tche yuan* (written in the early fifteenth century, repr. Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extreme-Orient, 1932), p. 56.

25 My thanks to Southworth for pointing this to me.

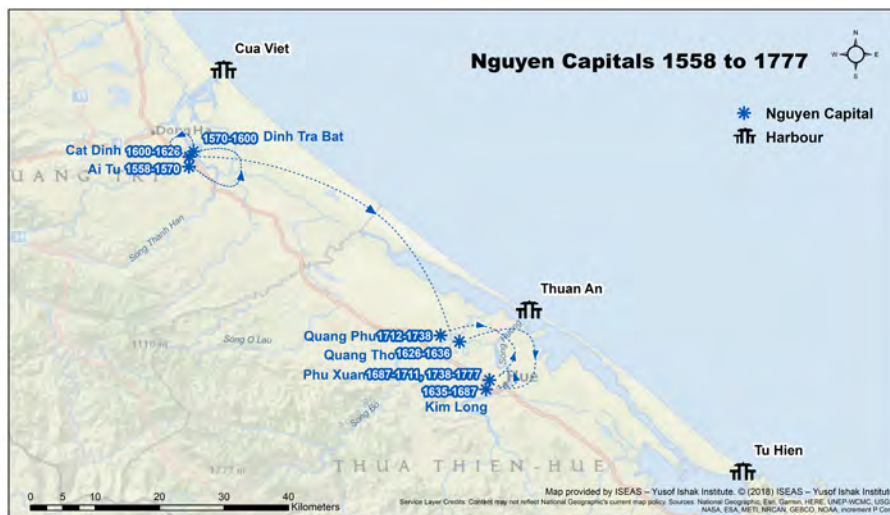
26 On the Bồ River, *Ngan-nan tche yuan* says: 'Bồ Đà River is in the Bồ Đà district. It is originated in Laos. It passes east of the district office to the shallow sea (Phá Tam Giang), it also runs to the Tam Kỳ River of Hóa Châu, it is deep enough to travel by ship. *Ngan-nan tche yuan*, p.56; 'This river is clearly the Bồ River', states Vietnamese historian Đào Duy Anh. See Đào 2006:282.

ago (Lê and Nguyễn 2006:70–73, 232). The Ô Lâu River could have been a much larger river in the first millennium. As such, the Bồ-Ô Lâu rivershed could well lie in the old heartland of Linyi as it existed during the first millennium and well into the first half of the second millennium. That this area continued to be the heartland of the Nguyễn Cochinchina is evident if we locate the Cham citadels and Nguyễn lords’ capitals on the same map, as Map 2 shows below. Map 3 gives more details on the location of the Nguyễn capitals.²⁷

Map 2: Cham citadels and Nguyễn lords’ capitals. Source: map by Pearlyn Pang, copyright of the ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.



Map 3: Locations of Nguyễn lords’ capitals. Source: map by Pearlyn Pang, copyright of the ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore.



All of the three earliest capitals—Ái Tử (1558–1570), Dinh Trà Bát (1570–1600) and Dinh Cát (1600–1626)—are in the vicinity of the Thuận Châu (Ô) citadel in the north. The second group of the Nguyễn capitals—Phước Yên (1626–1636) and Bắc Vọng (1712–1738)—are

27 Nguyễn Tiến Đông, ‘Cuộc tìm kiếm lý sở chúa Tiên Nguyễn Hoàng’ [In search of Nguyễn Hoàng’s capitals], paper presented to the conference on the locations of the Nguyễn capitals, Quảng Trị, 17th July 2017. I am grateful to Dr. Đông for sharing his insights on the excavations in Quảng Trị.

located near the two southern Linyi sites of the ninth to the fourteenth century: Văn Xá, Linyi's capital in the first millennium, and the Hóá Châu (Lý) citadel. It might not be a mere coincidence that among the 71 Cham archaeological sites found in the region north of Hải Vân Pass, 15 are in Quảng Bình, 40 are in Quảng Trị, and yet only 14 are in the Thừa Thiên-Huế area (Guillon 2008:77).

Both the Bồ and Ô Lâu rivers flowed east to empty into the Phá Tam Giang (Tam Giang lagoon). In the west, they are connected by way of a lagoon called Hải Lăng. Today, the Hải Lăng district has no port access, but the Ô Châu cận lục of the sixteenth century says that Hải Lăng Lagoon was 'linked to the long port (*trường cảng*) in the east and mountains in the west'. This means that there was once a large span of water that connected to a port nearby. This is confirmed by Anne-Valérie Schweyer's recent GIS research on the river-port system in central Vietnam. Her research shows that the coastal lagoon complex of the Thừa Thiên-Huế area 'did not have its Southern opening coastal lagoons of today's Thủy Tú, Cầu Hai and Thủy Khê mouth, but with an access to the Northern Quảng Trị River, up to the Hải Lăng district.' (Schweyer 2016:3) This is to say, the Thuận An seaport, the major sea access of the Huế area, was a later development, while the northern port in Hải Lăng used to be important. Hải Lăng is directly connected to the Ô Lâu River, which flows from the Mount Ô Lâu. This area has no longer the access to the sea but before the seventeenth century it would have been important to the maritime life of Linyi and the Cham peoples. The landscape of this area fits the description of the *Shuijingzhu* of the fifth century. Did the Vietnamese name of Ô Lông harbour come from the Cham original name Ô Lâu? Was Lô Dung, the Hán-Việt pronunciation of the name of Lurong harbour, associated with Ô Lâu in any way? This is of course a speculation, but one crucial factor is indeed missing in the theories of Tứ Hiền being the famed Lurong harbour of the first millennium: all of Linyi's ports and citadels were conveniently located along a big river, while the current Tứ Hiền harbour is next to no river. The harbour of Lurong would have to be next to a big river.

Now a lagoon 52 kilometres long, Tam Giang did not appear in the sixteenth-century source Ô Châu cận lục. Only two *phá* (lagoon) were recorded: one was called Nhật Lệ Lagoon in Quảng Bình, and the other was the Hải Lăng Lagoon in Quảng Trị. Today, none of the two bodies of water are called *phá*; both shrank so much that they are now called *bàu* or *trầm* (both mean 'small lake').²⁸

There once existed a large span of lagoon that seems to explain why there are 78 small bodies of water called *trầm bàu* spread all over Thừa Thiên-Huế's coastal area, most of which are found in Phong Điền District.²⁹ This is where the Bồ and particularly the Ô Lâu rivers run through, both connecting to the water at the north of the current Tam Giang Lagoon. The latter might have formed gradually during the seventeenth century, and its shape seems to have changed a great deal over time, as Schweyer points out.³⁰

28 'Phá Nhật Lệ: It is deepest on the northeast of the lagoon where dragons stay; Phá Hải Lăng: it is close to the Lộc Sinh village, and it is linked to the long port at the east and close to the mountain at the west. There is a temple of the Water deity at the south and an ancient pagoda at the north.' (Ô Châu Cận Lục 1997:10a–2a). The Phá Nhật Lệ of the sixteenth century is where the well-known archaeological site Bàu Tró is located, in Đồng Hới city, Quảng Bình. The remains of the second lagoon, the Phá Hải Lăng, is now in Trầm Trà Lộc, Hải Xuân, Hải Lăng district, Quảng Trị province.

29 *Địa chí Thừa Thiên Huế*: 'Tự nhiên' (2005), <https://www.thuathienhue.gov.vn/vi-vn/Thong-tin-du-dia-chi/tid/Dac-diem-chung-ve-hinh-thai-thai-tram-bau/newsid/>, accessed 7 Oct. 2017.

30 Anne-Valérie Schweyer (2016:4).

How does the understanding of the landscape of the Hải Lăng area shed light on the historical physical structure of Linyi kingdom? The name Oli became two names when, in 1301, the Cham king Che Man presented two prefectures, which the historical records call Ô and Lí, as a wedding gift to the Vietnamese court when he married Viet princess Huyền Chân. The Trần court changed the names of these two prefectures into Thuận Châu and Hóa Châu. When we locate the two citadels for Thuận (Ô) and Hóa (Lí) prefectures on the map, it shows that they were connected by a river system. Thuận Châu citadel, the northern citadel located in Hải Lăng District, was connected to Tam Giang Lagoon in the north, while Hóa Châu citadel lay on the southern end of Tam Giang Lagoon at the time (now it extends to Cầu Hai).³¹ History presents continuity here. In 1466, when Lê Thánh Tông set up an administration in the area that today lies between Hà Tĩnh in the north and Hải Vân Pass in the south, he named this area Thuận Hóa, a reference to the combination of Thuận Châu and Hóa Châu prefectures, that is, the historical territory of Oli, the territorial core of Linyi about a millennium before.

TWO MAPS REVEAL THE SHIFT OF A HARBOUR

Vietnamese are not keen map makers traditionally, but there was one exception in the seventeenth century. The 50-year war (1627–1672) between the Lê/Trịnh lords of the northern Đại Việt and the Nguyễn lords of the south led the Nguyễn clan's northern rival to regularly map the territory of the Nguyễn domain. At least two such maps were produced in the seventeenth century—one set seemed to have been made in the early decades of the seventeenth century and another a few decades later.

The first set of maps was published in 1896 by Dumoutier. This set seemed to have been made on the basis of some earlier maps, probably during the late fifteenth century when King Lê Thánh Tông invaded Champa in 1471. Dumoutier's Map 17 shows a rather big waterway connecting Huế and the Nguyễn lords' earlier capital, Cát Dinh, in Quảng Trị, and the Tư Dung/Tư Khách harbour is found in the vicinity of Huế and served as the city's port—a place where palaces, markets, granaries, inns, and elephant stables, etc. were concentrated.

On the last map in the series called 'Maps of the Pacified South in the year of Giáp Ngọ' (1774), however, the location of Tư Dung harbour changed (Li and Reid 1993:38–54). It is found far south of Huế, while its formal location lay in the south near today's Eo/Thuận An harbour. Anne-Valérie Schweyer wrote about the story of Eo/Thuận An port based on her GIS data research. In correcting Dumoutier's view expressed in 1896, Anne-Valérie Schweyer points out that this was a new gate, which sat next to the early Nguyễn lords' palaces. Its movement to the south and closure might have forced the Nguyễn court to

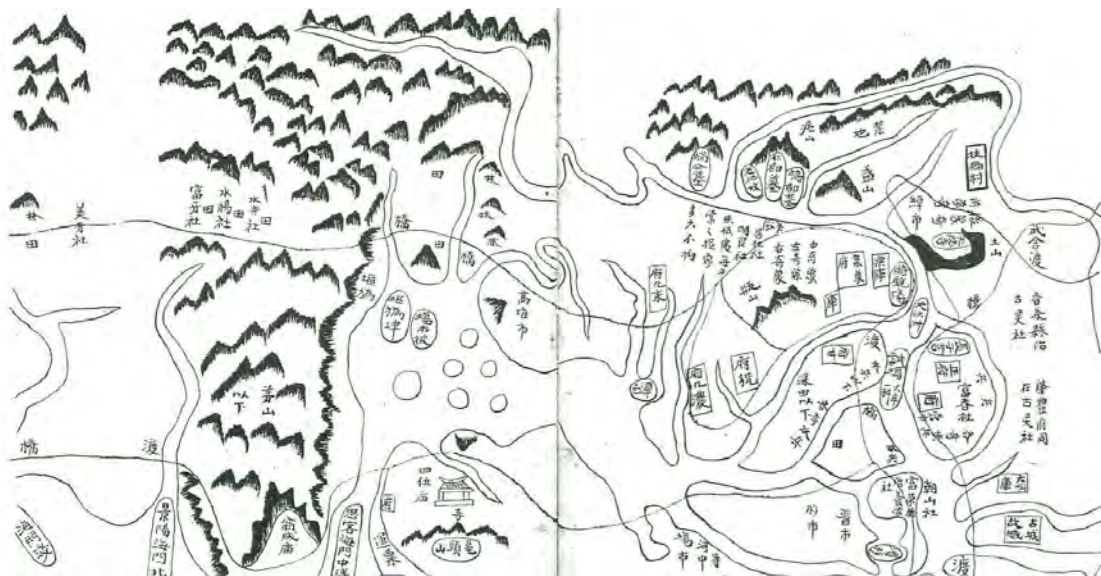
31 Ô Châu Cận Lục: 'Hoa Chau citadel: It is located in the Dan Dien district, the Dan Dien River (Bồ River) runs from its west, there is a small branch of the [Bo] river runs through the citadel. On the right hand of the [small] river the school of the Prefecture of Trieu Phong and the prefecture office are located. The Kim Tra river (Huong river) runs on its south. On the north is the lagoon, and on its east is the huge pond of tens of thousands of *khoanh* of water. The citadel is surrounded by water on all sides. The walls of the citadel are 100 *zhi* (长三丈高一丈为一雉). It is so tall that it reaches the clouds. The topography and heaven's will made it so strategically suitable for defence. In 1362 the king ordered Do Tu Binh to be in charge of the region, who *finished* building this citadel' (p. 57a); 'Thuan Chau citadel: it is within the territory of the Hai Lang district on the west there is the Truong Giang (Long River, Thach Han river). The Giap Bridge is built here very high and beside it there is the market of Dẫn. The district office is outside the citadel while the government granaries are located inside of the citadel' (p. 57b).

move its capital from Cát Dinh in Quảng Trị to Phước Yên in Thừa Thiên-Huế (Schweyer 2016:5-6).

Map 4: Location of Tư Khách harbour in a map likely made in the 17th century (map from Dumoutier 1896: map 17)



Map 5: 'Map of the Pacified South in the year of Giáp Ngọ' (1774) (map adapted from Li and Reid 1993:38-54).



Geologists seem to be ready to talk about such changes and ruptures. Trần Đức Thành, a geologist based in Huế, summarised the changes of the landscape of the Huế area as follows:

By the fifteenth century Thuận An became the only outlet of the Hương river, while Tư Hiền became secondarily important and filled up at an increasing rate. The Phú Cam River, which had been the main stream of the Hương River, almost dried up, while the Bồ River joined completely with the Hương; the Ô Lâu River zigzagged into the Tam Giang Lagoon, and the Thuận An Gate moved three times and seven kilometres in the last 100–200 years. The Tam Giang lagoon is now much shallower and narrower, reducing its body of water at a speed of 2.4 mm per year. This means that the depth of the lagoon is only half of what it was in the last 600 years. (Trần 1997:147)

CONCLUSION

With this paper I have tried to visualise the landscape of the former southern Linyi—today's Quảng Trị and Thừa Thiên-Huế area—of the last two millennia. One point seems to stand out when we piece together the archaeological, geological and GIS evidence with the fragmented historical sources. Different from the area of Quảng Nam to Bình Thuận, where mountains and valleys kept southern Cham principalities apart, several big rivers inland and lagoons on the coast adjoined the Ô and Lý region up to the seventeenth century, with no mountain standing in between. This was a well integrated area with aromatic resources. The Thạch Hãn River connected the Cửa Việt with the trans-Mekong area, which still provides the best access from the entire Trường Sơn Range to the latter till today. The Bồ-Ô Lâu river deltas were heavily populated, as is evident with the concentration of the Cham ruins on Map 1. This area provided a solid material foundation on which Linyi thrived for centuries, connecting it to the China market and the South Sea. It was also where the Vietnamese administration of the Thuận Châu and Hóa Châu prefectures was established in the fourteenth century.

Yet this is a changeable coast. Historical Linyi was situated in a narrow space (average 15 kilometres) between the mountain and the ocean. As shown above, it was often assailed on both sides, by storm water from the mountains and by typhoons from the sea. The central coast's sandy soil is unstable and constantly changing, so it opens and closes its sea gates frequently. During the first five centuries CE, it was also a highly contested border area between the Han province Jiaozhi and Linyi, and therefore the borders between the two shifted constantly. The seventeenth and eighteenth century seemed to have experienced remarkable changes in the landscape of this region, a result of the Vietnamese migration and population boom, whereas the Perfume River assumed its domination in the area.

Joining the scholarly forefathers and new vanguards, I have tentatively tried to make a small contribution on the landscape of Linyi, out of a pile of often confusing and contradictory sources. But like other interpretations of Linyi, with increasing numbers of scientific discoveries in the region, it could be revised or rejected anytime in the future.

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