Vietnam at the Khmer Frontier: Boundary Politics, 1802–1847

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the challenging spatial organization of Nguyễn Vietnam: the binary relationship between civilizational expansion and the construction of a state boundary at the Khmer frontier. It examines the process whereby the Vietnamese moved southwest into the Khmer world and territorialized a contested terrain as part of a civilizational and imperial project. The process employed the state's administrative infrastructure and cultural institutions to erase ethnic, political, and cultural diversity in the lower Mekong. This article argues that Vietnamese expansion was not simply an attempt to carry out the will of heaven and Confucian cultural responsibility; rather, it was a search for peripheral security and a response to regional competition. In fact, the seesawing between civilizational mission and territorial consolidation confused the Nguyễn bureaucracy with regard to Cambodia's political and cultural status and affected Hue's frontier management. As a result, the Vietnam-Cambodia boundary was the object of frequent shifts and negotiations. Only after facing Siamese invasion and experiencing fierce Khmer resistance did the Vietnamese court gradually replace its civilizational perspective with a more practical approach to border management, out of which emerged the modern borderline.

KEYWORDS: Nguyễn dynasty, Vietnam-Cambodia boundary, history of cartography, lower Mekong

INTRODUCTION

For the early Nguyễn emperor Gia Long (r. 1802–1820), who emerged victorious from three decades of war following two centuries of division, and his heir, Minh Mệnh (r. 1820–1841), several urgent priorities were to unify Vietnam, extend the reach of the state, and secure the country's borders, which entailed gaining control over both land and people. Debates at court about how to achieve these goals were couched in the rhetoric of a civilizing mission, on the one hand, and in calls to protect the empire's borders, on the other. This article examines the dynamic relationship between these two modes of thought—one focused on people and the other on land—with particular reference to Minh Mệnh's abortive expansion into Cambodia in the 1830s. The interplay between an expansionist, civilizing mission and demands for territorial consolidation had a major impact on the geography of the Vietnamese southwest well before colonial rule.

Two concepts previously employed to describe Minh Mệnh's failed project— "Vietnamization" and "regional competition"—partially capture the dynamic relationship among the politics of cultural expansion, contests for regional hegemony, and shifting geography; however, they do not trace Huế's evolving spatial imagination, especially the construction of a geographical consciousness through the project (Chandler 1974; Rungswasdisab 1995; Choi 2004a).[1] This centralizing state projection not only collected topographical knowledge but also created knowledge about political subjects in the service of extending governance to the frontier of the empire by "graphing space, or producing an ethnographic picture" of the landscape (Davis 2015, 338). The commingling of two discursive modes—civilizing mission and territorial consolidation—confused Nguyễn officials with regard to Cambodia's political and cultural status and affected the court's ability to design a consistent policy for the frontier. How it was imagined depended not only on the perceived sociocultural character of the frontier, but also, and more importantly, on the court's desire to ensure border security.

Both Minh Mệnh and his son Thiệu Trị (r. 1841–1847) struggled between imperial ambition and the limits of their state's capacity for expansion. Enthusiastically invoking the Confucian mission to civilize the frontier, Minh Mệnh abolished the Cambodian monarchy in 1834 and turned the kingdom into Vietnam's thirty-second province as the Western Com-

mandery (Trấn Tây). But even Minh Mệnh recognized the limits of the court's military capabilities. When, after defeating a Siamese invasion in 1834, the governor of Hà Tiên submitted a proposal to extend military campaigns beyond the Khmer land into Siam, Minh Mệnh replied: "If we bring an army from far away to invade, can we be assured of victory? Even if we win, can we settle in their land? Can we command their people? Even if we could settle in their land and command their people, could we be sure that order would prevail over one hundred years? Therefore, is there any reason for sending soldiers to this far-flung boundary?"[2]

By the time Thiệu Trị came to the throne in 1841, the tide had turned in favor of Siam in the confrontation over Cambodia. Reports from Phnom Penh revealed that "the rebels are everywhere, forming forts, settling on strategic grounds, and using those tactics to fight back. From the beginning, we [Nguyễn troops] have been able only to attack [the Cambodians] along riverbanks and in the vicinity of their forts, while leaving their major bases untouched. . . . Therefore, the enemies are still free, never exhausted."[3] Those who faced the Khmer and Siamese directly in battle had become increasingly pessimistic about the court's ability to maintain Cambodia's status as a Vietnamese province. Instead of speaking of a moral mission to civilize an ambiguous and contested space, they demanded the construction of a practical, solid, and fixed border. Realizing that his father's self-imposed civilizing mission threatened the security of his empire, Thiệu Trị yielded to their advice and ignored calls to pursue his father's expansionist agenda.

CONTESTED GROUND

The Vietnamese and Thai had competed for supremacy along the Mekong River since the fifteenth century. Acting on behalf of the Nguyễn lords who ruled the Southern Realm (Cochinchina) from 1600 until their demise in 1775, Nguyễn Cư Trinh (1716–1767), the chief architect of the eighteenth-century expansion into the lower Mekong, pursued a policy of gradually annexing Khmer land. This resulted in the intermingling of Vietnamese, Chinese, Siamese, and Khmer people and a fluid cultural and political environment. The lower Mekong region in the eighteenth century has been described as "borderless, centerless, polyglot, multi-ethnic and multicultural" (Cooke and Tana 2004, 5–8).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Cambodian central plain was the last space of contestation between the two centralizing states on the mainland, Vietnam and Siam (Trocki 2009, 339). The death in 1809 of Mạc Tử Thiêm, the last in a century-long line of Mạc quasi-satraps in the port of Hà Tiên (which had once served the Cambodian district of Banteay Meas), gave Gia Long the opportunity to end the Mạc clan's hereditary rule over the port and to bring it into the regular Vietnamese administrative structure. With the end of Hà Tiên's autonomous status, Cambodia became both site of contestation and buffer between Siam and Vietnam. Vietnamese were moving west in large numbers; it was thus only a matter of time before several isolated Khmer areas in An Giang, Bến Tre, and Tây Ninh were incorporated under Vietnamese control. One of Gia Long's first major actions was to deploy an army to Phnom Penh in 1813 and appoint a governor-general to oversee Cambodian affairs in support of King Ang Chan (1792–1834) against Siam.

THE RHETORIC OF CIVILITY AND BARBARISM

In his seminal book *Siam Mapped* (1994), Thai historian Thongchai Winichakul argued that "the spatial discourse of *siwilai* (civilization) was a comparative geography of civilization, given that 'geography' can mean not only the arrangement of actual space and knowledge of it, but also the knowledge and discourses whose effects subsequently constitute spatial practices" (2000, 529). A significant aspect of nineteenth-century Siamese expansion was the "forced migration of local people to resettle in the Siamese-controlled area" (Rungswasdisab 2014). Siamese policy thus resulted in the movement of border populations into settled and culturally dependable areas. The Huế court dealt with the frontier differently: besides sending people out from the core to new areas (rather than away from them) and establishing administrative institutions, Huế also sought to convert local people to "civility."

Nineteenth-century Vietnamese divided the world into three spaces: the core, the frontier, and the region of the "distant peoples." The inhabitants of these different spaces were the targets of different political and cultural projects, namely civilization through education (*giáo hóa*), pacification of the periphery (*phủ biên*), and accommodation of the distant people (*nhu viễn*).[4] Boundary definition among those categories would determine policy.

Following Chinese ideas, the Vietnamese distinguished between *hoa* (civilized) people, among whom they counted themselves, and *man di* (barbarians); this distinction dictated their position in the world order. The *hoa* resided in the central core, or Middle Kingdom, which is "where wise men live, where the vital energy of everything concentrates, where sages teach people, where benevolence reigns, where poetry, writing, rituals, and music flourish, extraordinary talent is prized, where outsiders admire, and where barbarians follow" (Wang 2008, 131). Terms that Vietnamese used to signify their civilization's glory included *hoa* and *văn hiến*. Employing a different discourse than the modern concept of civilization, *văn hiến* simply signified the existence of institutional records (*văn*) and of wise men (*hiến*). As such, it was a powerful claim to intellectual development and political superiority. In 1368, the founding Ming emperor bestowed on Vietnam the title "Realm of Manifest Civility" (Văn hiến chi bang) on the occasion of a tributary delegation's journey to the Chinese capital (Nguyễn Trãi 1435, 30 a/b). In the following centuries, the Vietnamese elite repeatedly deployed the term as a source of cultural pride. In 1831, when Qing officials characterized Vietnam as "barbarian" (*di*), the Nguyễn envoy, Lý Văn Phức, protested that his country was actually *văn hiến* (Lý Văn Phức 1831, 24b–25a).

Of particular concern regarding Cambodia was the Vietnamese view on the utility of buffer zones and on the importance of the barbarian periphery to the civilized core. This view was articulated by Hoàng Kim Hoán, vice-minister of the Ministry of Personnel, after Bangkok annexed Vientiane in 1827:

> Recently, after Siam invaded Lanxang [Vientiane kingdom], some court officials proposed that we should ignore Lanxang's predicament and wait until Siam transgresses our boundary to strike back. I personally consider that Nghệ An is the backbone of our kingdom; beyond is Trà Lân, which borders Lanxang. Thus, Lanxang is our shield; it should not be abandoned. If the Siamese are waging this campaign [merely] to assuage their anger by looting property and kidnapping women, then there is nothing to be said. However, if they conquer garrisons and towns and oppress the people of Lanxang, it will be tantamount to destroying our shield. Even though they do not expand into our barbarian vassals' lands, our vassal barbarians will be close to them [Siamese], and naturally will become their dependents. If our barbarian vassals become their servants, unavoidably Trà Lân, which now belongs to us, will be lost to them.[5]

The Khmer world's position in the geocultural schema of core, periphery, and distant lands shifted dramatically during the early nineteenth century, and Cambodia appeared in all three spatial and cultural categories. In *Abstracts of Minh Mệnh's Policies* (MMCY), the Khmer land was recorded in both the section of "pacified frontiers" (quyển 24) and that of "accommodated distant peoples" (quyển 25). In the *Official Compendium of Institutions and Usages of Imperial Vietnam*, Cambodia was listed as a tributary, while Siam, Western countries, and Myanmar formed a separate entry of "distant peoples" (quyển 132–136). Following the invasion of Cambodia in 1834, Minh Mệnh declared:

> Chân Lạp [Chenla/Cambodia] is now incorporated in the map of Vietnam. I therefore want to reorganize it into prefectures and districts and to teach its people. However, its customs are different; to pacify people and seek their submission, we cannot rely on laws and rules alone. Only by introducing governmental institutions and gradually inserting them [into local society], can their old manners be changed.[6]

When, in 1837, the Bureau of Astronomical Observatory drafted a record of weather description for different regions in which Cambodia appeared under its original name, Chân Lạp, Minh Mệnh reacted angrily, stating, "Cambodia was established as the Western Commandery; there is no one who is not aware of that." He ordered the mistake corrected and the chief officials of the bureau punished.[7]

The binarism of (sinicized) civilization and barbarity profoundly influenced Minh Mệnh's peripheral policies. To him, ethnographic distinctiveness was irrelevant. His new name for the empire, the Great South (Đại Nam), dropped the Viet identity and focused on the differentiation between the northern and southern empires, between the civilized and the barbarians:

> Trương Minh Giảng often told me that the Khmers are mostly simple and trustworthy, perhaps better than the Thổ people in the north. I don't believe so. Among the Thổ people in the north, some are literate and fluent in the Viet language, and therefore can be educated. The Khmer are as thick as balls of mud and know nothing. Most of them, moreover, are cunning and deceitful. Even if one tries to pour advice into their ears and teach them, it cannot be done. I predicted what happens today. Luckily

> our country is now prosperous. [If] we lack soldiers, we can recruit more; [if] we lack grain, we can provide more. There will be a hard campaign before we can bring order [to the Khmer]. This great task should take place in my reign rather than be left for my sons and grandsons. [8]

This civilizational rhetoric was celebrated among Confucian literati. An official reported from Phnom Penh that

> since our ancestral sages began to open it up, it has now become a superior civilized country [*văn minh thượng quốc*] that can be compared equally with Min [Fujian] and Guang [Guangdong and Guangxi]. The spread of good customs is one thing, but a brilliant leader is also essential to open the land up, and then to civilize uncouth people with writing, to cover fish scales with clothing, to turn unhealthy air into good, and to transform barbarians into *Hoa* [Vietnamese].[9]

Following the establishment of the Western Commandery in 1834, Minh Mệnh proclaimed that Cambodians would be called "new subjects" (*tân dân*) and launched a systematic civilizational project.[10] He sent a secret edict to the chief Vietnamese officials in the Western Commandery, ordering them to integrate Vietnamese and Khmer socially and culturally so that Cambodians could "acquire Viet customs and absorb the imperial grace soon"; the officials were to "use Viet customs to transform barbarian manners."[11] In practice, the expansion of the space of (Vietnamese) civilization relied on two main components: the mobilization of vagrants, criminals, rebels, Chinese migrants, and landless peasants to bring new land into cultivation or to settle in already inhabited areas, on the one hand, and, on the other, to force the native populations to adopt Vietnamese cultural norms—from funerary rites to clothing and hairstyles. The Nguyễn rulers' transforming zeal was not limited to "barbarians." In 1839, Minh Mệnh decreed that women in the north should stop wearing skirts in the local style in favor of Chinese-style trousers (southern women had already made the switch a century earlier) (Cadière 1915). Ten years earlier, he had approved a memorial to forbid Chinese from shaving their heads and wearing the [Manchu] queue.[12] But in Cambodia, the pursuit of cultural conformity was far more sweeping and comprehensive, leading later to accusations of cultural genocide (see, for instance, Moses 2008).

BLURRED BOUNDARIES

Although the notions of a civilizational frontier and state boundary coexisted in Nguyễn political ideology, they pointed to different modes of classifying people, politicizing the landscape, and demarcating geography. In order to govern, states control populations through regulation, often by creating different ethnic categories and administrative units. In an intermediate zone, such as the western bank of the Hậu River (Bassac), the lines between these different categories were extremely hard to define and maintain.

Before the nineteenth century, the Khmer world was part of a premodern "galactic polity" structure of complex and fragile relationships between the lower groups (Khmer Krom), who lived downstream (Water Chenla/Cambodia), and the upper groups (Land Chenla/Cambodia) since the Tang period (Nguyễn 1900, 46a; Tambiah 1976, 134–137). A thirteenth-century Yuan record showed areas along the Lower Mekong as generally empty of people and filled with extensive tracts of swampy forests and water buffaloes (Zhou 1981, section on "Rivers and Mountains"). The Khmer land suffered a demographic decline after the collapse of Angkor in 1431, and the capital frequently shifted southward among Udong, Lovek, and Phnom Penh. From the seventeenth century onward, the Khmer world in the Lower Mekong was an unstable space of intruders and emerging autonomous powers. The flat and swampy terrain was a landscape of intermingling settlements and ever-changing human networks.

The loose political networks of the Khmer groups located in the lower region made them vulnerable to foreign penetration, starting with the Vietnamese in the 1620s. For the Nguyễn lords in Huế, "There is no way to the west, and it is too hard to go north; therefore, we should do our best to advance to the south" (Nguyễn Cư Trinh 1750, 56–57). Heading south, they turned the Lower Mekong into a major arena of contestation with Siam and a "meeting point between savagery and civilization" (Turner ([1920]) 1948, 3). Vietnamese moving southward and Chinese fleeing the Qing conquest of China gradually captured strategic economic grounds, especially along the Gia Định-Hà Tiên corridor (Nguyễn Văn Hầu 1970: 3–24). After failed attempts in 1739 to recapture Hà Tiên (whose Mạc ruler had submitted to the Nguyễn in 1708), Phnom Penh was never again able to organize a military campaign to defend its southeastern frontier.

Nguyễn Cư Trinh's 1753–1756 campaigns reached deep into the Khmer land of Cambodia and promoted Hà Tiên's dramatic expansion with territorial annexation. The newly established corridor became a stepping-stone for Vietnamese to cross the Tiền River. As a result, Trà Vinh and Ba Thắc, together with three additional administrative units—Đông Khẩu (Sa Đéc), Tân Châu (An Giang), and Châu Đốc (Hậu Giang)—were incorporated into the Nguyễn domain.[13] Hà Tiên annexed five other Cambodian prefectures, allowing Vietnamese influence to reach the Cà Mau peninsula and the southern Cambodian coast.[14] Along that coast, in present-day Koh Kong Province, Siamese and Vietnamese troops were stationed in intermingled settlements. This area was ceded to Hà Tiên by Cambodia in 1757 (and remained under Vietnamese control until the reign of Tự Đức [1847–1883]) (Tống and Dương [1810] 2013, 24 n4).

Bangkok's own need for international trade and resources in its wars against Myanmar also led it to take great interest in Cambodia. Dramatic consolidation of the periphery brought Siamese troops to the eastern bank of the Mekong River. They incorporated the Lao kingdoms of Vientiane and Champassak and the Cambodian provinces of Battambang and Siem Reap into Siam's direct administration (Rungswasdisab 1995, 13, 51–64). Caught between the two expansionist empires, local Khmer chiefs sought a measure of autonomy by paying tribute to both Huế and Bangkok. Cambodia's status as vassal to two overlords (*muang song fai fa*) was recognized by Siam, which called itself "father" while Vietnam was "mother" (*Chotmaihet ratchakan* 1812; *Phraratchaniphon phrabat* 1968, 14).

As Siam and Vietnam penetrated deeply into the Khmer land in Siem Reap, Battambang, the Cardamom Mountain, the southern coast, and Hà Tiên, state boundaries rarely remained fixed. Since the time of Phraya Taksin (r. 1767–1782), Siamese troops had been stationed along the Cambodian coast west of Hà Tiên (Sài Mạt Prefecture). In 1810, following the incorporation of Hà Tiên into the Vietnamese administrative structure, Emperor Gia Long asked Rama II to remove those soldiers for the Nguyễn to recapture Sài Mạt (Tống and Dương [1810] 1966, 6).[15] That same year, Vietnamese troops appeared in Can Bot (Kampot) and established military posts in places mostly inhabited by Khmers. Siamese soldiers were reportedly stationed not far, at the Prek Tiek Sap estuary. To protect those areas, Huế reinforced Hà

Tiên and islands in the Gulf of Siam. Military posts on Phú Quốc Island protected the sea-lane between Siam and southern Vietnam, a strategic corridor for all naval campaigns in the region (Tống and Dương 1966, 39–40).

Increasing Siamese intervention in Cambodia alarmed Gia Long. He designed a boundary guarded by a local army to master the natural terrain and implemented a defensive system with military posts and forts.[16] After officials were dispatched to map the area around Châu Đốc, three thousand Vietnamese soldiers and two thousand Khmers were recruited in building the garrison. In Gia Long's words, the defensive network was intended to "protect Hà Tiên and support Phnom Penh."[17] In 1819, he ordered Hà Tiên's army chief to measure the distance between Hà Tiên and Châu Đốc and map the topography.[18] His new project, the Vĩnh Tế canal, would fundamentally transform the natural and political landscape of the region. Gia Long realized that "Vĩnh Thanh and Hà Tiên border Cambodia; commercial and official transportation cannot rely on maritime routes; therefore, there is a need to utilize the Châu Đốc River, to dig a canal to promote transportation." [19] Along with the completion of the 87-kilometer-long Vĩnh Tế canal, Phú Quốc was incorporated into Hà Tiên's administration, and travel that once took days at sea was drastically shortened. Other canal projects between the 1810s and the 1830s helped push the Vietnamese state further into the Khmer world. The water channels not only provided transportation, aided communication, reclaimed land for agriculture, and promoted the establishment of villages but also formed defensive lines protecting the settlers and the frontier army. Nguyễn Văn Thụy (Nguyễn Văn Thoại in southern spelling, 1761–1829) describes their achievements:

> I followed imperial instructions, worked hard and carefully, recruited people to establish villages; depending on the terrain: [I created] one route to the long river; one route going up to Sốc Vinh, and another to Lò Gò; I pacified the people, established villages, reclaimed land for rice fields and orchards. Although it does not wholly fulfill my expectations, in comparison to the old days, much progress has been achieved. The soil at the foot of the mountain is free of wild grass and thorns; bamboos grow bright green; the landscape [of Sam Mountain] is beautiful. The landscape is no less beautiful than that of the Central Land (Trung Châu). (in Nguyễn Văn Hầu 1970, 12–13).

Connecting a large area from Hà Tiên through the Seven Mountains (An Giang) to Châu Đốc, the Vĩnh Tế canal represented a challenge to Siam's territorial ambitions. In their own campaigns of 1833–1834, Siamese troops even made an effort to fill the canal but failed against the large Vietnamese naval forces. Still, Vietnamese settlements along the canal were frequent targets of Siamese campaigns that sought to demolish Vietnamese bases, capture Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia, and send them to Bangkok. Siam's chief general, Chao Phraya Bodidecha, ordered the Thai troops in Hà Tiên, Kampot, and Kampong Som to "evacuate the people, burn down the houses in every town, and demolish the town, so that only the forest and the rivers are left" (Rungswasdisab 1995, 98–99).

LIKE SILKWORMS EATING MULBERRY LEAVES

Thongchai suggests three dimensions of territoriality: "a form of classification by area, a form of communication by boundary, and an attempt at enforcing" (1994, 16). Early nineteenth-century Vietnam experienced the construction of all of these elements along the Vietnam-Cambodia contact zone. After defeating a Siamese invasion in 1833–1834, the Vietnamese reached close to Battambang, posing a direct threat to Bangkok; however, their failure to put down Cambodian rebellions caused them to withdraw from Phnom Penh, and the boundary moved back to the Vĩnh Tế canal. A Siamese military report confirmed the appearance of Vietnamese garrisons along the west bank of the Mekong River stretching from Kampong Svai, to Kampong Thom, Staung, Pursat, and Kampong Chnang. The garrisons connected with the military network in the south and southwest in Hà Tiên, Kampot, and Kampong Som, and from Châu Đốc to Phnom Penh (*Chotmaihet ruang thap* 1933, 9). The post of Châu Đốc guarded the entrance to Vĩnh Tế and therefore was not only the gateway to Hà Tiên but also, more importantly, controlled the Mekong River and marked the boundary between lower and upper Khmer. In 1832, it formed the major center for the establishment of the frontier province, An Giang. Following the Siamese invasion and Khmer rebellion, the Châu Đốc garrison was enlarged and became the biggest military base along the Vietnam-Cambodia frontier. The governor of An Giang also oversaw Cambodian affairs.

Warfare among Cambodians, Siamese, Vietnamese, and overseas Chinese had a profound impact on the traditional networks of kinship, tribute, patronage, and vassalage in the contested space of the Lower Khmer world. Each side competed fiercely in building its own infrastructure and destroying the other's. Every time they left Phnom Penh, the Siamese "took everything away, and burned what had been people's houses, until not one remained; they took away everyone's possessions, masters' and slaves' alike, and they carried off all the people until not one man was left" (Chandler 2008, 38). When the Vietnamese returned, their priority was always to build moats, canal, wells, ponds, garrisons, and ramparts (Chandler 2008, 38). A Siamese map of the lower Mekong (*Muang Phrataphang* in Thai) shows intermingling Khmer and Vietnamese sites with the note that "the damned Vietnamese burnt this village" (Phasuk and Stott 2004, 27). These interwoven Vietnamese and Khmer administrative zones broke up the landscape into small isolated areas. Established along strategic water channels, the Vietnamese were able to control transportation networks between the upper and lower Khmer lands, "separating [those living in the Lower Mekong] from the king and his senior officials" in the political center upstream.[20] Their isolation rendered them even more vulnerable to Vietnamese expansion. Vietnam, however, faced enormous challenges in penetrating further into the Khmer world. It gained territory "bit by bit," like "silkworms eating mulberry leaves" (*tàm thực*).[21]

Besides having to contend with the resistance of local populations and Siamese forces, the Vietnamese were operating in an unfamiliar landscape of mountains, valleys, lakes, river islands, and swamp stretching from the Khorat Plateau in southern Laos to the Mekong estuaries, in which traditional wet-rice cultivation and village-based social organization could not emerge naturally without massive state involvement and military protection. A major obstacle to colonizing the swampy plains was the hydraulic extent of the Long Xuyên Quadrangle into Cambodia and the river ports of Châu Đốc and Long Xuyên, and into the two seaports of Hà Tiên and Rạch Giá. These were the only channels capable of releasing water before any infrastructure could be built (Biggs 2010, 18). The Long Xuyên Quadrangle and the Plain of Reeds (Đồng Tháp Mười) were "the two areas that caused the most angst for nation-building" (Biggs 2010, 18).

The Plain of Reeds is a vast wetland depression of about 13,000 square kilometers encompassing the modern provinces of Đồng Tháp and Tiền

Giang (Vietnam) and parts of Svay Reang (Cambodia). It lies in a flat lowland region subject to seasonal flooding between July and December. At the peak of the flooding, between September and the end of October, the plain effectively becomes a vast lake, with some areas flooded to a depth of nearly 4 meters, while it suffers severe drought during the dry season. On the western bank of the Hậu River is the Long Xuyên Quadrangle (Kiên Giang, An Giang, and Cần Thơ). The area of 489,000 hectares is marked by the present-day Vietnamese-Cambodian borderline, the coastline along the Gulf of Siam, and the Hậu River (see map 1). Like the Plain of Reeds, this land is flooded annually to a depth of 0.5–2.5 meters during the rainy season, while it experiences drought and soil salinization from the rising seawater during the dry months (Stearling, Hurley, and Le 2006, 271). Australian anthropologist Philip Taylor argues that the varied natural terrain is not only responsible for forming seven distinct Khmer-populated subregions, but also that the intersection between a high floodplain, a vast swamp, and the coastal strip dotted with forested limestone mountains (from An Giang to Hà Tiên) functioned as a topographical barrier against the Vietnamese (Taylor 2014, chaps. 5 and 6).

In order to move into Cambodia, the Vietnamese had to establish a political and economic base over these two floodplains. Labor shortages and unfamiliarity with techniques of flood control (different from the traditional dyke construction of northern Vietnam) hindered their advance. Khmer uprisings made the task more difficult. It took several decades to increase the number of Vietnamese settlers and guarantee their steady progress against local populations. (The flow of Vietnamese and Chinese into the region eventually increased significantly under French colonial rule between 1860 and 1920 and profoundly transformed the region's landscape demographically and economically [Engelbert 2007].)

DEFENDING THE BORDER

As premodern Southeast Asian polities practiced the politics of manpower rather than of land (Scott 2009, 65), fixed geography was not as significant as controlling and mobilizing people. The Nguyễn court, however, had its own strategy for expanding its territory by sending Vietnamese to the margins of the empire. Although 40,000 households were registered in Gia Định and

surrounding areas in the eighteenth century, they were far outnumbered by the Khmers (Lê Quý Đôn 1973, quyển I: 37b–38a). The difficulties of state building and the struggle between Viet and non-Viet in the lower Mekong posed a major challenge to Huế (Choi 2004a, 129–159). In 1819, there were 1,500 đ*inh* (registered males between the ages of 18 and 60) in Hà Tiên.[22] Five years later (in 1824), their numbers were down to 668 đinh, distributed among thirty-seven villages; they collectively owned 348 plots of rice fields. The garrison of Hà Tiên was organized into five units of 250 soldiers.[23]

In 1822, a Commission of Education was appointed, a signal that the imperial margin was now to be culturally integrated. The new immigrants formed an additional district (Hà Tiên huyện) with two communes, all placed under the authority of Gia Định. In 1826, Hà Tiên and two other districts (Long Xuyên and Kiên Giang) formed a new prefecture, An Biên, which literally means "pacified frontier."[24] In order to reinforce Hà Tiên as a bulwark for the southwestern frontier, Minh Mệnh ordered local officials to draft a plan of agricultural and demographic expansion:

> The emperor observes that Hà Tiên is broad. But rice land is still limited and unexplored and villages are scarce. Therefore, he wants to launch a campaign to reclaim land in order to expand resources and support the population. [He] sent Gia Định officials instructions from three court departments to work out a plan for employing vagrants to till the uncultivated land, establish villages, cultivate fields, and plant mulberry for the benefit of many generations to come.[25]

Setting up plantations became an increasingly significant part of that strategy. Doing so would not only bring new land into cultivation under Vietnamese control but also provide foodstuff for soldiers. In 1835, Minh Mệnh ordered the Ministry of Defense:

> Hà Tiên has various resources and the current situation is peaceful. Thus, we instruct Governor Trần Chấn to follow the ancient mode of plantation, select arable land, and provide soldiers with buffaloes and agricultural tools, so that those soldiers can both cultivate the land and practice military skills. Those crops are to be distributed to the troops for one or two years; afterward those lands will become rice fields and the crops will be used as military grain. It is a long-term policy in which the state does not need to provide monthly rice rations, but only salary.[26]

The policy also covered poor farmers and vagrants in Kiên Giang and Hà Châu; they were given buffaloes and rice seed to exploit the uncultivated land.[27]

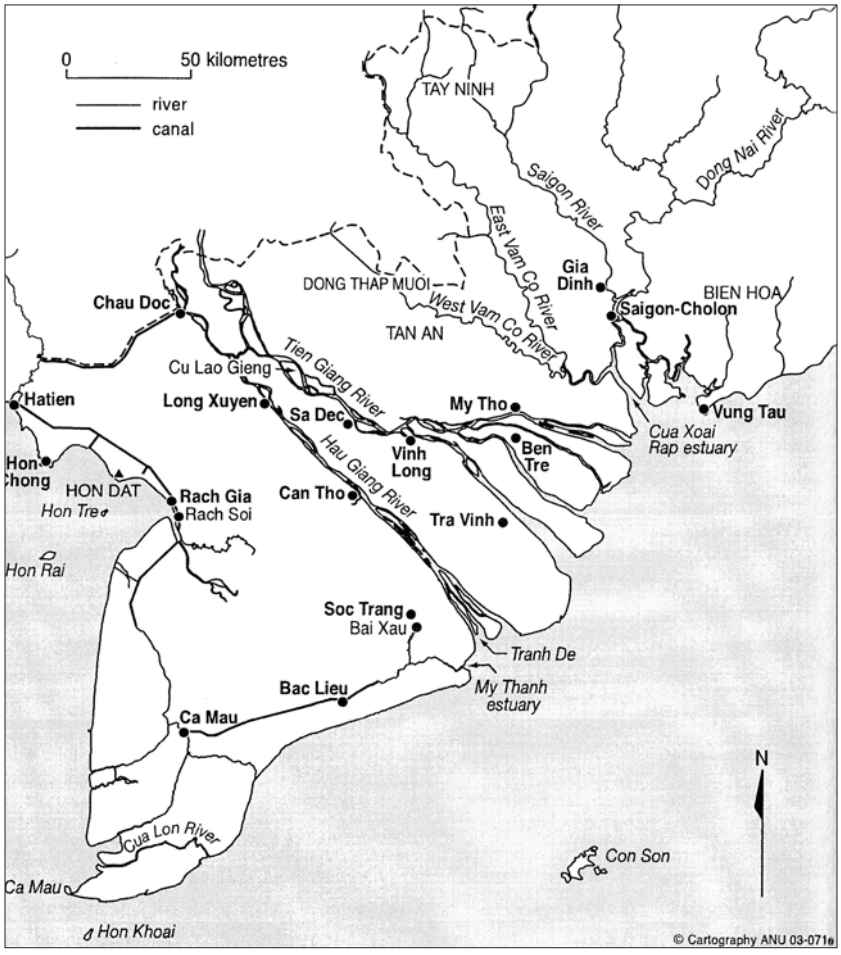
Huế's aim was to strengthen the military structures with civilian ones.[28] These defense networks not only represented the institutionalization of state building but also served to imprint Vietnamese geographical identity at the frontier. Minh Mệnh's instructions to the Ministry of Treasury were to create dense Vietnamese settlements along the boundary. These settlements were considered the best tools of state expansion:

> Châu Đốc is a strategic land at the boundary. [I] previously asked Nguyễn Văn Thụy to recruit people to reclaim land and establish villages, by offering them money for capital and rice. Many times, I offered them an extension when they could not pay back [what they owed]. If they still could not, I exempted them from repayment. In truth, I want the land not to be left wild and my subjects to have employment in order to have people to protect the boundary. This is important for protecting the frontier; I don't even care for revenue from land taxes.[29]

Large numbers of convicts were sent to Hà Tiên and An Giang to work on military plantations. They were encouraged to settle permanently along the frontier "as a strategy to keep the boundary populated."[30]

At first, attempts to settle Vietnamese subjects along the frontier did not work well. The Viet colonizers were too few to overcome the Khmer numerically and they were scattered over a vast and varied terrain. Moreover, they preferred to engage in trade and associated work instead of working in fields. The governor of An Giang Province complained to Minh Mệnh:

> The land in the Six Southern Provinces is fertile. The only problem is the engrained laziness of people who mostly work on boat transportation and leave the fertile lands to the wilderness. River transport is harmful to agriculture, as wild grass is harmful to rice. In addition, before, commercial boats to Phnom Penh were subject to taxation, but not those within the Six Provinces. Therefore, [I] ask for an order that from this tenth month onward, trading ships should be carefully checked and classified, issued certificates, and subjected to taxation; in this way, those who have taken up lowly jobs (*mạt nghệ*) will resume agricultural work.[31]



MAP 1. Map of the Lower Mekong. *Source*: Cooke and Tana (2004, 136).

Despite official complaints, both Hà Tiên and An Giang eventually grew rapidly during the 1830s. Hà Tiên's jurisdiction extended over one prefecture and three districts; An Giang included two prefectures and four districts. The population of Hà Tiên and An Giang reached 23,000 *đinh*, according to an 1838 state survey. In Châu Đốc alone, an 1830 report by Gia Định officials reported forty-one villages and 800 *đinh*. After nearly two

decades (in the early 1850s), An Giang Province had a population of roughly 23,000 *đinh*.[32] Increasing demographic mobilization and settlement were greatly assisted by the construction of infrastructure along the Khmer frontier. Among the new infrastructure, military plantations (*đồn điền*) played an essential role; not accidentally, they grew dramatically during the 1850s, as the Nguyễn state was able to employ not only soldiers and convicts but also southern landowners, peasants, Chinese immigrants, and Khmers (Choi 2004b; Taylor 2014, 183). This essentially transformed the frontier landscape where Vietnam could control strategic transport routes and major economic centers. It ranked among the Nguyễn's most successful state projects in constructing its boundary with Cambodia. By designing a new human landscape, Huế legitimized its claim over a new territory, and in fact put it under steady governance.

COMMUNICATION AND DEFENSE

Garrisons, guardhouses, canals, and Vietnamese villages became distinctive visual markers of the Huế-controlled geography. The Nguyễn gave special attention to shoring up the communication system and defensive structures from Hà Tiên to Tây Ninh (which was established in 1836). Officials in Hà Tiên were sending monthly reports on the frontier situation to Huế.[33] To facilitate those communications by both land and water, a massive infrastructure was built during the reign of Minh Mệnh. In 1835, he aimed to set up overland transportation throughout the southern provinces, reaching Phnom Penh for the first time. Châu Đốc became connected to Vĩnh Long by a new 114-kilometer road, while other routes linked Châu Đốc with Hà Tiên, the Vĩnh Tế bank, and Phnom Penh. A postal system was added along those routes.[34] Forts in Hà Tiên and Châu Đốc were reinforced in preparation for warfare and to suppress local resistance. To the walls built under the Mạc in the early eighteenth century, new fortifications were added in Hà Tiên, with cannons at Kim Dữ Mountain. When, in 1833, the size of Châu Đốc fort was found insufficient to launch large military campaigns into the Cambodian plain, the court ordered a new fort to be built in Long Son. This location not only better overlooked the Mekong but also was well connected to Hà Tiên (84 kilometers), Phnom Penh (102 kilometers), and Vĩnh

Long (111 kilometers).[35] Along the Vĩnh Tế canal, a considerable number of military stations were established as bulwarks against Khmer penetration, especially during the 1840s rebellion.

The Khmers had to rely on the canal to organize their resistance, because it went through some of their most important population centers. Nguyễn Tri Phương sent a memorial in 1841 with a proposal for blocking the Khmer influx across the frontier by setting up forts and guardhouses in Tiên Nông, Vĩnh Thông, Vĩnh Gia, and Vinh Điều along the canal. In addition, prisoners and vagrants were divided into groups of fifty to form villages along its bank. The settlers had their tax reduced and were given free access to virgin land and the possibility of establishing villages under military supervision.[36] Those communities played a crucial role in the Nguyễn's suppression of the Khmer revolt by cutting off the lower Khmer from the patronage of Phnom Penh. The centers of Khmer resistance in the Seven Mountains, Ba Xuyên, were gradually isolated. When a new canal system linking the Tiền and Hậu Rivers came into effect in 1844, Hồng Ngự, Tân Châu, Châu Đốc, Hà Tiên, and the Gulf of Siam all became interconnected. They formed a boundary of roughly 200 kilometers of posts, fortresses, and garrisons.[37]

The boundary line signified the steadily increasing Vietnamese presence in the previously Khmer landscape. It delimited a claimed and protected space that cut through the Khmer world. The edge of the Vietnamese political space was moving from Gia Định and Biên Hòa in the seventeenth century to the modern-day borderline in the mid-nineteenth century. This land boundary was effectively linked to islands in the Gulf of Siam. In 1835, the governor of Hà Tiên requested authorization to integrate thirteen islands into its jurisdiction; most important among those were Phú Quốc and Thổ Châu.[38] The emperor ordered a detailed survey of the islands off Hà Tiên, with an analysis of their strategic position, population size, distance from the coasts, and location on maps, so that military stations could be set up. While most of these places remained uninhabited until the late nineteenth century, Phú Quốc included twelve villages and played an important role in guarding the sea entrance to Hà Tiên and the lower Mekong. It had two military posts with a sizable number of cannons and several hundred soldiers.[39] Phú Quốc and other islands thus formed a protective barrier at sea from any Siamese threat.

For all of these successes, both Minh Mệnh and Thiệu Trị were ultimately unable to bring Cambodia into the empire's maps. In the end, it was not civilizational geography but a practical military mindset and limited state capacity that would shape the southwestern boundary. When Huế replaced the Cambodian monarchy with its own administrative system in 1834, the new imperial boundary came close to the Siamese domain, but the hope of turning Cambodian people into "civilized" subjects so that they would not be used by Bangkok against Vietnam was not realizable. It proved impossible to maintain a large army in Phnom Penh. Although only 120 kilometers separated Châu Đốc and Phnom Penh, there was no overland route between the two until 1835. While both Hà Tiên and An Giang depended heavily on rice and copper coins sent from Gia Định, they now had to provide supplies for the dispatched army. Each military campaign was costly for Huế because rice and cash had to be transported from Gia Định to the frontier for the Vietnamese troops, officials, and the Cambodian followers.[40] In 1833, the rice levy in Hà Tiên was about 1000 *hộc*, insufficient even for local consumption.[41] In 1837 alone, An Giang ordered 50,000 *hộc* of rice and 50,000 strings of cash (*quan*) to send to an army in Phnom Penh. Such amounts were sent to the frontier almost annually. An 1840 memorial asked the court to send 20,000 *quan* of copper and 20,000 *phương* of rice to Phnom Penh, with another 30,000 *quan* and 50,000 *phương* of rice kept in reserve in An Giang. A second request from Phnom Penh that same year planned for more than 105,700 *quan* and 76,700 *phương* of rice to be stored in An Giang.[42]

More significantly, the annexation of Cambodia caused severe conflict with the Khmer populations on both sides of the Vĩnh Tế canal. Their interpretation of political geography was not based on direct rule, assimilation, taxation, population registration, labor conscription, and techniques of administration (Chandler 1975, 20). These were all civilizational standards for the Vietnamese, but they were meaningless to the Khmer. When Khmer workers were deemed slow, the Vietnamese beat them "like cats, dogs, cows, or buffaloes" (Chandler 2008, 38). Their furious responses tested Huế's comprehension of its civilizational project and the practicability of moral geography. Imperial patience toward these "new subjects" was also put to the test. Minh Mệnh complained to the Privy Council:

> Thổ people [Cambodians] are incontrollable: at times they submit; at times they rebel, they are unpredictable. Last year, they endured several sackings and massacres by Siamese troops. Their land was bare. [I] look after them; the court dispatched an army to repel the enemy, saved them from despair and issued them blankets. Why then did they become hostile and turn into enemies of the Kinh [Vietnamese], and carry out massacres?[43]

Such frustrations unleashed a huge debate in Huế. Both civilizing mission and territorial expansion were invoked in support of moving beyond the Vĩnh Tế canal. Eventually, the practical voices of frontier generals and officials prevailed over the rhetoric of moral righteousness and civilizing mission. The frontier civilian and military officials read the politics of space differently, from a more pragmatic perspective than that of the majority of court officials. When a group of court censors suggested withdrawal from Cambodia, Thiệu Trị at first responded angrily that he could not leave his frontier subjects unprotected from barbarian invasion and raids.[44] However, consultation with military personnel finally convinced him otherwise. He ordered the withdrawal the following year and justified his decision by claiming that he did not want people "who are valuable to suffer for the sake of an insignificant thing, which is land."[45] The most recognizable result of the debate was the Vietnamese withdrawal to the defensive geography that had been constructed between the 1810s and the 1830s.

The withdrawal affected the contours of the Vietnamese western boundary. In Cambodia, both Bangkok and Phnom Penh posed a military threat to southern Vietnam and called for Nguyễn enforcement of the defensive line. In Hà Tiên alone, the military commissioner asked for 1,500 additional soldiers and established two more garrisons along the Vĩnh Tế canal, where 2,700 soldiers were already stationed. This helped to solidify the boundary and allowed more demographic mobilization under military protection. Having failed to gain a decisive victory over Cambodia, Huế agreed to enter negotiations and offered the Khmer king a tributary title in 1847. This time, most of Thiệu Trị's officials expressed little interest in either land annexation or civilizing mission: "If they revolt, use force; if they submit, use mercy."[46] His frontier commanders in particular played a significant role in the Cambodian solution by recalling its political status and recognizing the

boundary formed by Hà Tiên, Vĩnh Tế, and Châu Đốc. They convinced the court that the Khmers were not ideal subjects for a moral geography and that a sustainable boundary should be accepted for the purpose of Vietnamese self-protection:

> Even if today there is peace, there is no guarantee that another day will be free of trouble. There may be no end to the need to use the military. In addition, the dry season is approaching; the lack of water and the heat are severe. Many get sick and tired; thus prolonging the situation is without benefit. . . . It is not difficult to attack, but to maintain [Cambodia] is. The whole Western Commandery was the country of Cambodian barbarians. They mostly are wayward, cunning, untrustworthy, and unpredictable. Although they were included in previous maps, they belonged there merely in name. . . . Although we want to rally them and settle them in peace, their distrustful character cannot be relied upon. To do as before; that is, annexing them into our districts and prefectures and recruiting them into the army, is impossible.[47]

The court yielded to military advice and turned its attention to defending a landscape limited by the newly constructed boundary.

MAPPING VIETNAMESENESS

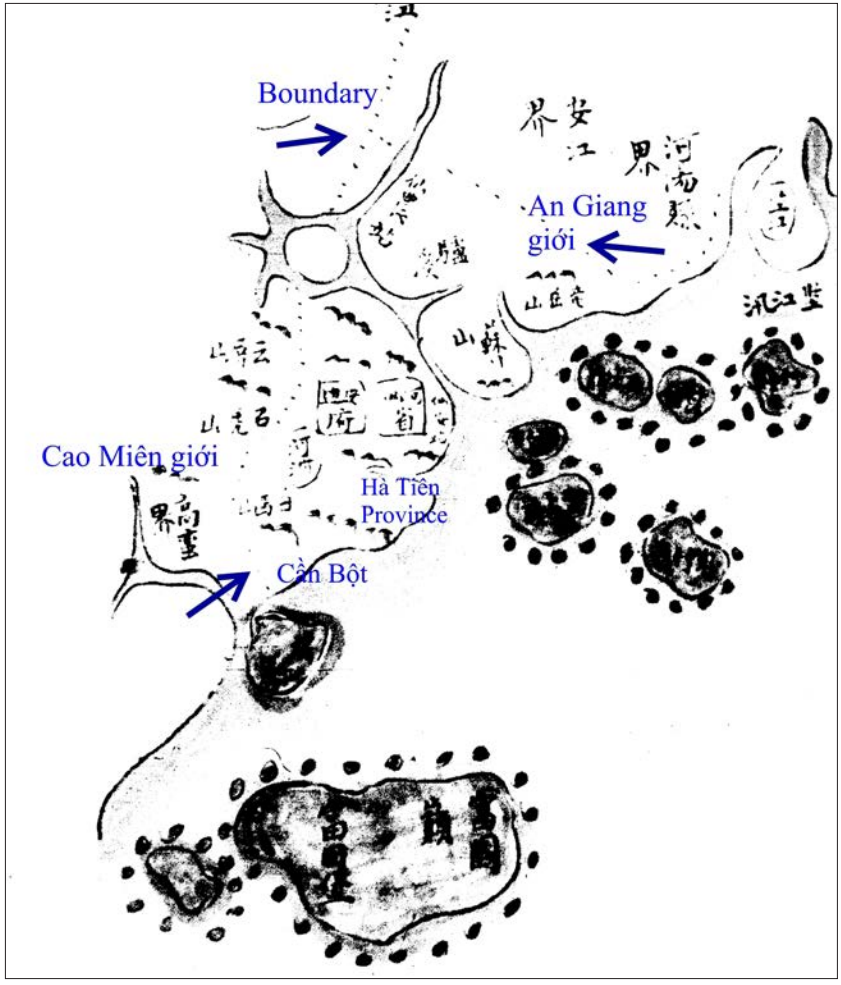
Cartography was a powerful geopolitical discourse in precolonial Vietnam. Because of continuous geographic expansion, visualizing space and comprehending geography were great concerns in Vietnamese political thought. Nguyễn imperial maps drawn between the 1830s and the 1860s show various geographical elements, including rivers (*giang*), mountains (*sơn*), walled citadels and administrative centers (marked by boxed-in names on the maps), islands, estuaries (*hải môn*), and military stations (*tấn*, *bảo*). Among these significant components was "boundary" (*giới*), which sometimes was marked by dotted and solid lines across rivers and mountains.[48] Cartographical representations of the southern provinces were marked with "Cambodian boundary/limit" (*Cao Miên giới*).[49] This might support the idea that a "state boundary" between Vietnam and Cambodia existed in the Nguyễn geographical perception. "Border" (*giới* or *địa giới*), however, was used for both provincial and "national" boundaries, with no special cartographical differentiation.

Thus, maps of Hà Tiên and An Giang in the *Comprehensive Maps of the Unified Great South* (*Đại Nam Nhất Thống Toàn Đồ*, 1861a) referred to both the "Khmer boundary" (*Cao Man giới*) to the west and the north and the "boundary of Định Tường Province" (*Định Tường giới*) to the east.[50]

Thus, the boundary with Cambodia was deemed no more significant than the boundary between adjacent Vietnamese provinces. From this perspective, the Vietnamese army did not "cross the state boundary" because Cambodia did not lie beyond the boundary but within it. After 1847, when Huế's interest shifted to putting down local resistance east of Vĩnh Tế, the Nguyễn accepted that Cambodia was to be excluded from their administrative geography. Imperial cartography reflected this geographical evolution. A map included in the *Complete Maps of Unified Đại Nam* (*Đại Nam Nhất Thống Dư Đồ* 1861a), probably produced during the reigns of Minh Mệnh and Thiệu Trị, showed the annexation of Cambodia to the Khmer land labeled as Western Commandery, which comprised two prefectures (Hải Đông and Hải Tây).[51] On another map in the same collection, however, Cambodia appeared as a separate kingdom (Cao Man quốc) bordered by Hà Tiên and An Giang Provinces (see maps 2 and 3).[52] In these maps, the space labeled as Cambodia is left empty; only Vietnameseness is of interest and is depicted by topographical and administrative features.

These two maps of Hà Tiên and An Giang belonging to two different collections (both with prefaces written in 1861) present a fairly realistic description of the terrain and human landscape, clearly demonstrating a relatively comprehensive geographical knowledge of the lower Mekong, including mountains, rivers, guarded posts, and estuaries.[53] Since these two provinces bordered Cambodia, the boundary was drawn in different legends. The Cambodian–Hà Tiên border was represented (see map 2) by a dotted line starting from Cần Bột estuary, while the Cambodian–An Giang border was represented by a solid line across the Mekong (see map 3). A similar solid line was also used to mark the boundary between An Giang and Hà Tiên. This inconsistency suggests that although the idea of boundaries and their visual representation already existed, they were in the process of being drawn both in physical reality and cartographical demonstration on maps.

While Vietnam was in the process of labeling its space with realistic and detailed borderlines in the nineteenth century, the recognition of a state boundary can be traced back to the *Lý* and *Trần* dynasties (1010–1400). The



MAP 2. Map of Hà Tiên Province. *Source: Đại Nam Nhất Thống Dư Đồ* (1861a, EFEO microfilm, A. 68, 170b).

concept of *giới* appeared in *Đại Việt Sử* Ký toàn thư (*Đại Việt Sử* Ký Toàn Thư 1984) in entries indicating Đại Việt's southern frontier in the eleventh century; however, a detailed visualization of boundaries was not provided until the mid-nineteenth century. Historian Nicholas Tarling suggested that border making emerged under colonial rule, and borders were designed

MAP 3. Map of An Giang Province. *Source: Đại Nam Nhất Thống Dư Đồ* (1861b, EFEO microfilm, A. 1600, 76a).

simply to avoid conflict among the Western powers (2001, 44). Such a perspective, while acknowledging the role of Western institutions, underestimates local factors. I argue that this new cartographical element predated the introduction of Western map-making techniques and was a response to the need for frontier management.[54]

CONCLUSION: BOUNDARY MAKING IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY VIETNAM

Over the nearly one hundred years since five Khmer prefectures were annexed to Hà Tiên in 1755, Vietnamese political boundaries moved westward. Frequent rhetorical shifts between civilizational frontier and state boundary characterized the Nguyễn intervention in Cambodia. Each time the language changed, so did the imagined geography. Cartographical collections made reference to both geographical imaginations. Through warfare and state making, a solid boundary emerged within that frontier and was enforced by Vietnamese military garrisons, civilian settlements, and canals. The Nguyễn utilized the boundary to promote state institutionalization, military advance into Cambodia, and a defensive line to repulse Siamese attacks.

In the end, that boundary was the negotiating ground not only among Vietnam, Siam, and Cambodia, but also among different Nguyễn conceptions of geography. In February 1847, Vietnamese troops withdrew from Phnom Penh for the last time after seeking for more than a decade to impose direct rule over the land. Despite the fact that no concrete national boundary appeared on precolonial Vietnamese maps, that boundary eventually formed the basis for the borderline between French Cochinchina and Cambodia. The canal that had figured as both conduit for Vietnamese penetration into the Khmer land and bulwark against Siamese expansion and Khmer rebellions became part of the new legal boundary. The process of recognizing geographical status, producing subjects, demarcating boundaries, and translating those recognitions into cartography was a worldwide phenomenon of the nineteenth century (Axel 2002). Such an anthology of radical change facilitated different aspects of modernity, including the introduction of fixed state boundaries. In the Asian context, this was not always a consequence of local–Western interaction; in the Vietnamese case, it resulted from a non-European process of frontier management that included labeling terrain, classifying imperial ethnography, expanding state infrastructure and administration, and consolidating territorialization (Choi 2009).[55] That the boundary established in the nineteenth century could be even more easily transgressed in the twentieth than it had been then is a permanent feature of the mixed natural and multiethnic human landscape.

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NOTES

1. For a more detailed analysis of Vietnamization in southern Vietnam, see Choi (2003).
2. *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên* (hereafter, ĐNTL) (1975, 10: 6).
3. ĐNTL (1975, 13:29).
4. *Minh Mệnh Chính Yếu* (hereafter, MMCY) (1972–1974, quyển 13: giáo hóa; quyển 24: phủ biên; quyển 25: nhu viễn).
5. ĐNTL (1975, 6:189).
6. ĐNTL (1975, 11:236).
7. ĐNTL (1975, 11:47).
8. ĐNTL (1975, 12:341).
9. *Trấn Tây phong thổ ký* ([1838] 2007, 155–156).
10. MMCY (1972–1974, quyển 24, 52a).
11. ĐNTL (1975, 11:136).
12. ĐNTL (1975, 7:25).
13. ĐNTL (1975, 1:79).
14. ĐNTL (1975, 1:79).
15. Siam and Myanmar had launched another war the previous year.
16. ĐNTL (1975, 3:185).
17. ĐNTL (1975, 3:294).
18. ĐNTL (1975, 3:364).
19. ĐNTL (1975, 3: 317).
20. See the map in Nguyễn Văn Hầu (1970, 4); *Trấn Tây phong thổ ký* ([1838] 2007, 154).
21. ĐNTL (1975, 1:147); Vũ Thế Dinh (1818).
22. ĐNTL (1975, 3:370).
23. ĐNTL (1975, 5:346, 349).
24. ĐNTL (1975, 5:189, 6:102).

25. ĐNTL (1975, 7:87).
26. ĐNTL (1975, 10:71).
27. ĐNTL (1975, 10:71).
28. MMCY (1972–1974, 24: 16b–17a, 20a/b).
29. ĐNTL (1975, 7:125).
30. ĐNTL (1975, 13:452).
31. ĐNTL (1975, 10:239).
32. ĐNTL (1975, 11:369, 14:397).
33. ĐNTL (1975, 11:18).
34. ĐNTL (1975, 7:410–411, 10:116).
35. ĐNTL (1975, 8:15).
36. ĐNTL (1975, 15:195–196).
37. ĐNTL (1975, 14:35).
38. ĐNTL (1975, 10:150).
39. ĐNTL (1975, 11:285).
40. MMCY (1972–1974, quyển 24, 30a). For annual copper coins provided to Cambodian princes and officials, see *Châu bản triều Nguyễn* (vol. 74, folio 22 [in the eleventh month of the Minh Menh's nineteenth year, 1838]).
41. ĐNTL (1975, 8:33).
42. ĐNTL (1975, 12:392). For reference: 1 *hộc* = 5 liters; 1 *phương* = 38.5 liters; and 1 *quan* = 600 copper coins. See *Châu bản triều Nguyễn, Minh Mệnh reign* (1820–1841, vol. 63, folio 16) on transporting rice to Trấn Tây.
43. ĐNTL (1975, 12:321–322(; *Châu bản triều Nguyễn* (1820–1841, vol. 62, folio 1) on Trương Minh Giảng's report to Huế about Khmer rebellions.
44. ĐNTL (1975, 13:139).
45. ĐNTL (1975, 13:180).
46. ĐNTL (1975, 14:195).
47. ĐNTL (1975, 13:304; 14:212).
48. See "An Giang Toàn Đồ" (Complete map of An Giang) in Đại Nam Nhất Thống Dư Đồ (1861a, 170 a/b).
49. Đại Nam Toàn Đồ (undated, 59a–60b).
50. See "Hà Tiên Toàn Đồ" (full map of Hà Tiên) in Đại Nam Nhất Thống Toàn Đồ (1861a, 169b).
51. Đại Nam Nhất Thống Dư Đồ (1861a, 172b).
52. Đại Nam Nhất Thống Dư Đồ (1861a, 1861b).
53. The body of Vietnamese knowledge about Cambodia and Thailand was dramatically increased from the late Minh Mệnh reign to the reign of Thiệu Trị and early Tự Đức, not only in terms of map production, but also official geographical compilations. See Cơ Mật Viện (1853) and Doãn Uẩn (1848).

54. See Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư (1984, 1:190) and Trương Bửu Lâm (1962, especially the maps of Địa Lý, Ma Linh, and Bố Chính, 16–17, 46–48, 193). For more analysis, see Whitmore (1994, 480–481, 505).
55. For an examination of consolidating geography and political identity in nineteenth-century Japan, see Howell (2005).

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