

The path of Cham cultural heritage

Ngô Minh Hùng, Ph.D, Van Lang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Việt Nam

William B. Noseworthy, Ph.D, McNeese State University, USA

Quảng Văn Sơn MA, Van Lang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Việt Nam

Florence Heri-tech: Online Edition

14 | 16 October 2020



Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Justification**
- 3. Present heritage management**
- 4. An update of preservation status**
- 5. Promoting value of monuments and local heritage**
- 6. Action plans towards a Path for the Future**
 - 6.1. Digitizing all Champa monuments*
 - 6.2. Inventory, objects, and inscriptions, digitization of all Cham sculptures*
 - 6.3. Plans preserving the monuments*
 - 6.4. Renovation of Cham museum and re-organization of managerial structure*

Conclusion



1. Introduction

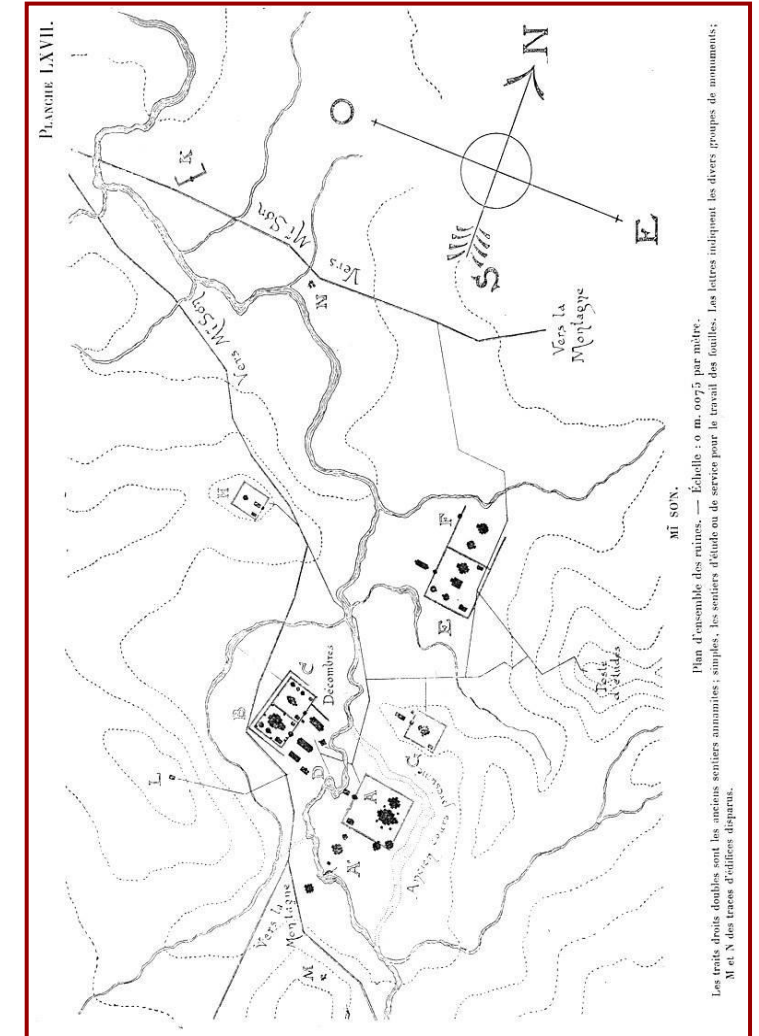
The Champa site of Mỹ Sơn is located in Quảng Nam Province, in central Việt Nam, 30Km southwest of Đà Nẵng, in a valley surrounded by a ring of mountains.

Mỹ Sơn was discovered in 1885, by a group of French soldiers. In 1897-1898, Camille Paris, the scholar of the future Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient.

In 1899, Luis Finot and E.E.L. de Lajonquière began the inventory of the inscriptions found at the site.

In 1901-1904, the chief architect of EFEO Archaeological Service Henri Parmentier and his colleague Charles Carpeaux started their work.

In 1955, the Second Indochina War began and an even more violent period stalled research.



Source: H. Parmentier in 1904



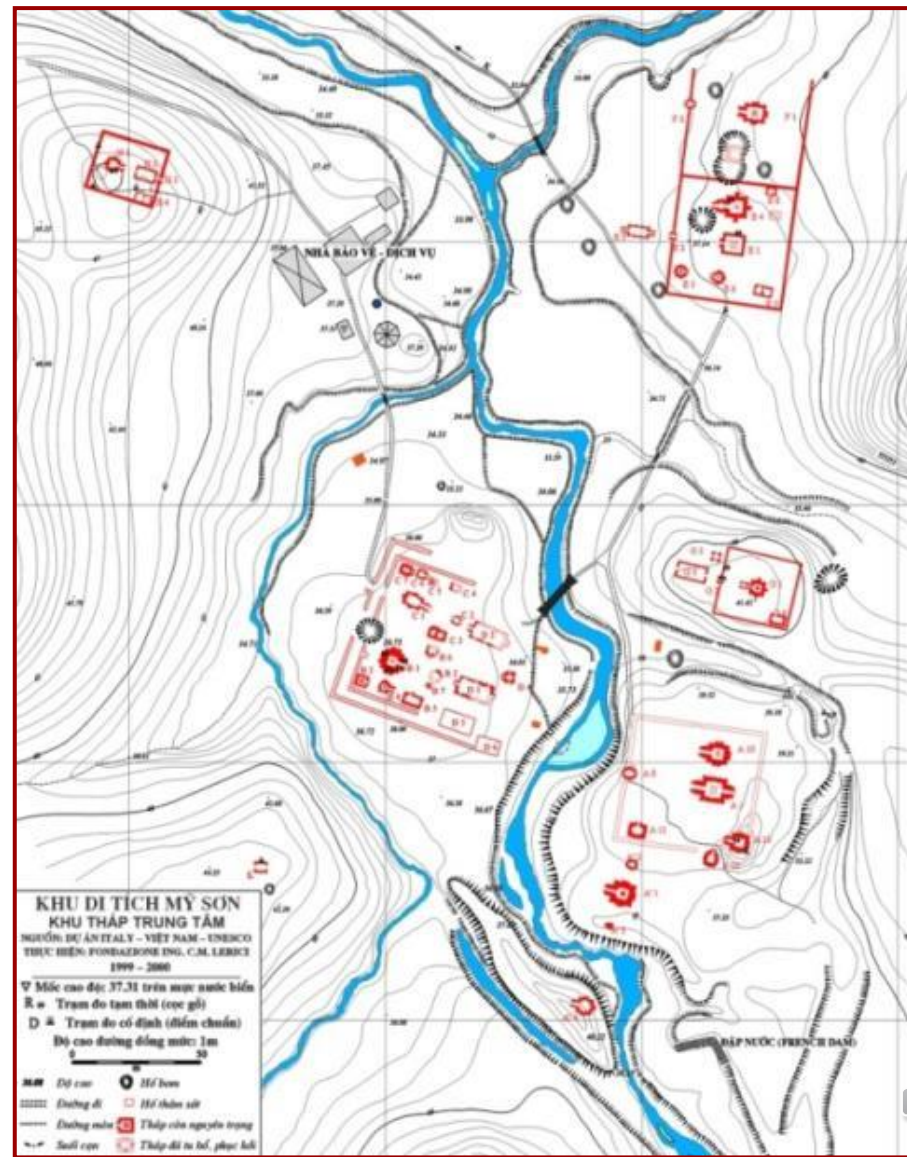
Source: Lerici Foundation Archive, 2000

In 1969, the site became a military target as American intelligence argued NLF forces were hiding in the area

From 1981 to 1986, the Việt Nam-Poland Cooperation worked at Mỹ Sơn.

In 1997, in the climate of newly emerging patterns of global cooperation, a trilateral agreement signed between UNESCO, the Ministry of Culture of Việt Nam, and FLP di Milano University was signed.

Finally, in 1999 Mỹ Sơn was recognized as a site of World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.



2. Justification



Figure 2. North-West (G group) views after the intervention in Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary (Source: Lerici Foundation Archive, 2017)



Figure 2. North-West (G group) views before the intervention in Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary (Source: Lerici Foundation Archive, 2005)





Figure 1. Restoration accomplished (G group) in Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary (Source: Lerici Foundation Archive, 2013)



2. Justification

According to the MOU on “Việt Nam-India Cooperation on the Conservation and Restoration of Mỹ Sơn World Cultural Heritage Area,” collaboration between the governments of India and Việt Nam in 10th July 2014

From 2016 to the present, Indian experts have been working to restore Temple K and Temple H.

The project is aiming to restore three temples (K, H, and A) with an estimated fund of 160 million rupees



Figure 3a. K group views before the intervention in Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary (Source: Internet)



3. Present heritage management

Generally, pre-modern socio-political and cultural spaces are not physically concurrent with contemporary administrative borders in Việt Nam.

For this reason, many research and conservation programs funded by federal funds are being conducted by institutionally affiliated researchers to meet desires of provincial managers

Champa culture and Cham cultural heritage are considerably significant enough to form a specialized agency of “Cham and Champa Cultural Heritage” as an independent legal entity.



Figure 3b. K group views after the intervention in Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary (Source: QVS, 2019)



4. An update of preservation status

- Efforts aiming to preserve such heritage must in a sense, be in charge with keeping a sense of authenticity of age
- Another approach, for example is to follow the methods used at the E7 temple (Figure 3) group in Mỹ Sơn



Figure 4. E7 views after the intervention in Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary (Source: Ngọc Đặng Khánh, 2015)



4. An update of preservation status

The preferences of the international community and Vietnamese authorities focused on sites that they thought they could capitalize upon for the tourism industry.

They simply ignored other sites, which are vital, based on the understandings from the Cham community.

**Temple A1 in Mỹ Sơn,
Source: H. Parmentier in 1904**



5. Promoting value of monuments and local heritage

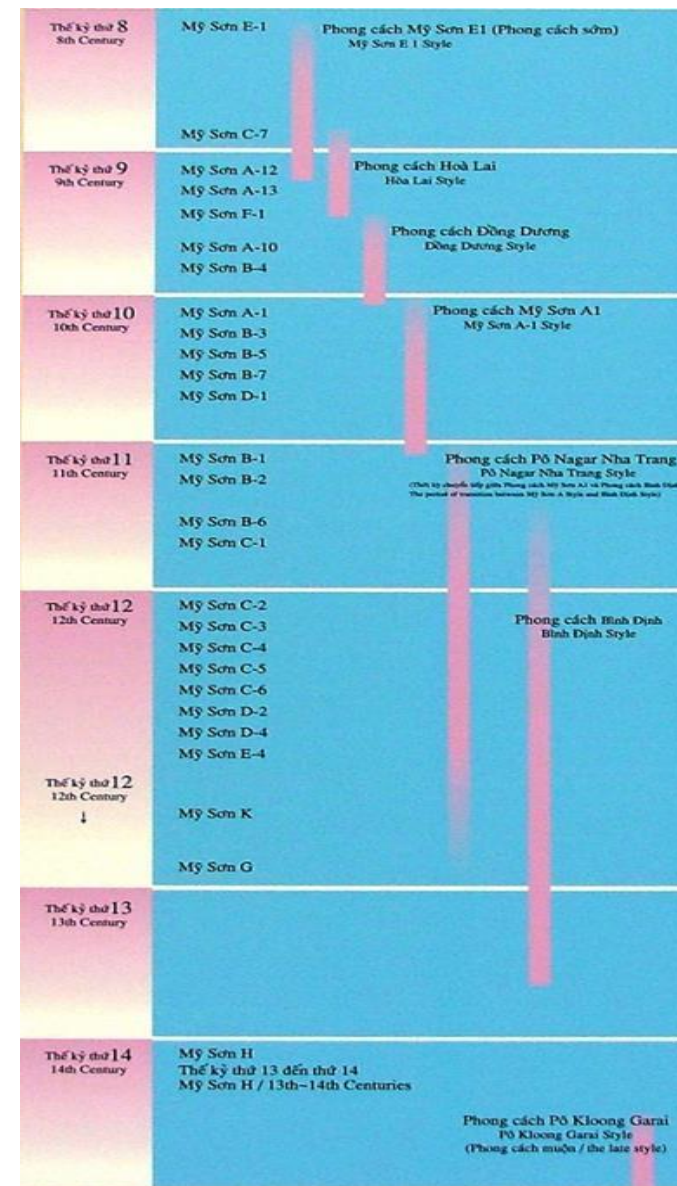


Figure 4. E7 views before and after the intervention in Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary (Source: Ngọc Đặng Khánh, 2011, 2015)



5. Promoting value of monuments and local heritages

- ✓ Promoting the value of monuments cannot be forced,
- ✓ If research and conservation are polluting to the land, and not completed sustainably, we would certainly lose local support.
- ✓ We should remember that our main purpose here is research, education, and the promotion of the understanding of culture



The development of structures in Mỹ Sơn

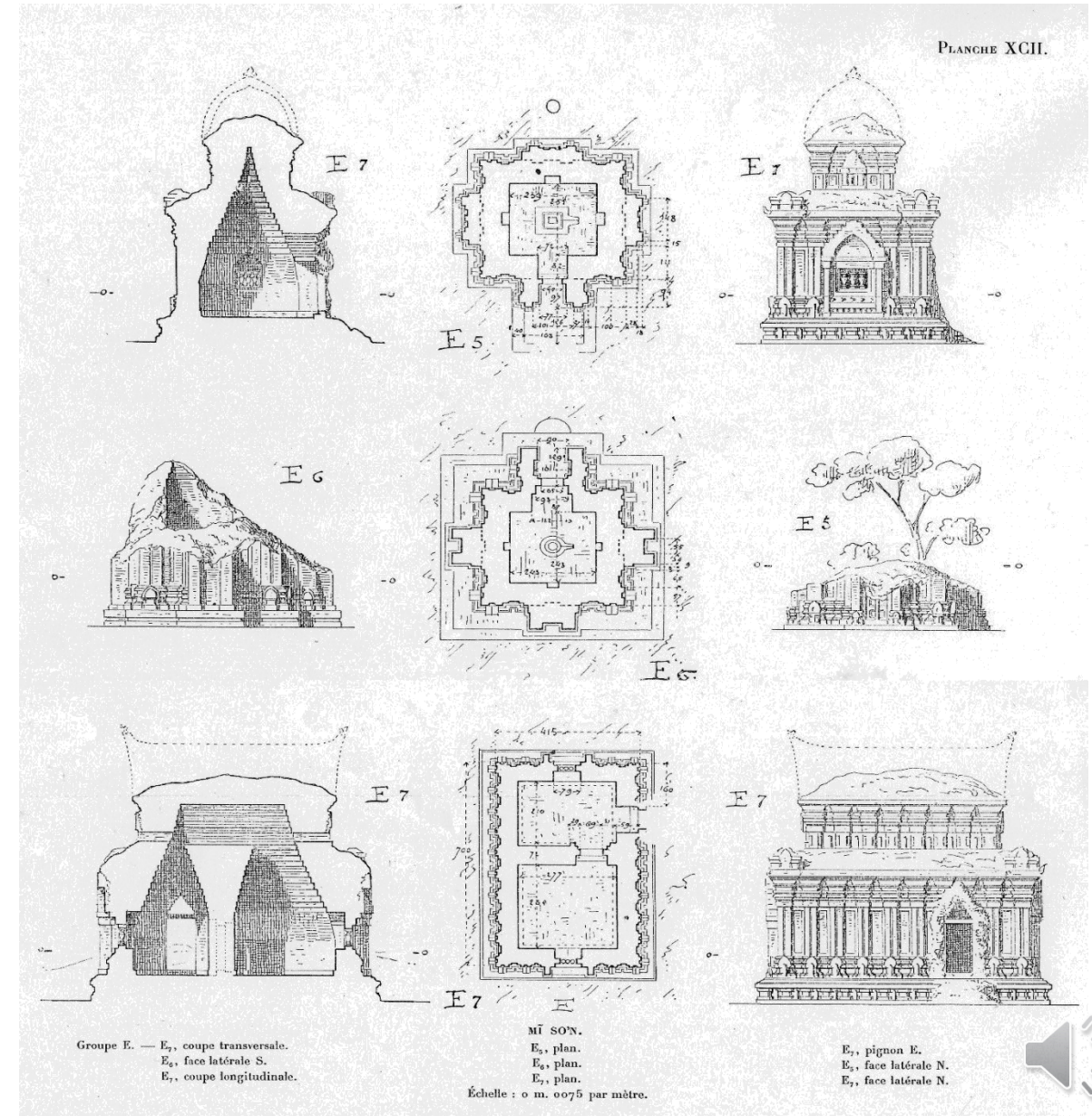


6. Action plans towards a Path for the Future

6.1. Digitizing all Champa monuments

A second period of systemic study of Champa cultural sites occurred under the project “Building techniques of Champa Temples: Service Restoration and Promotion of the Value of Religions” led by the Institute of Construction, Science, and Technology, which is subordinate to the Ministry of Construction in Việt Nam.

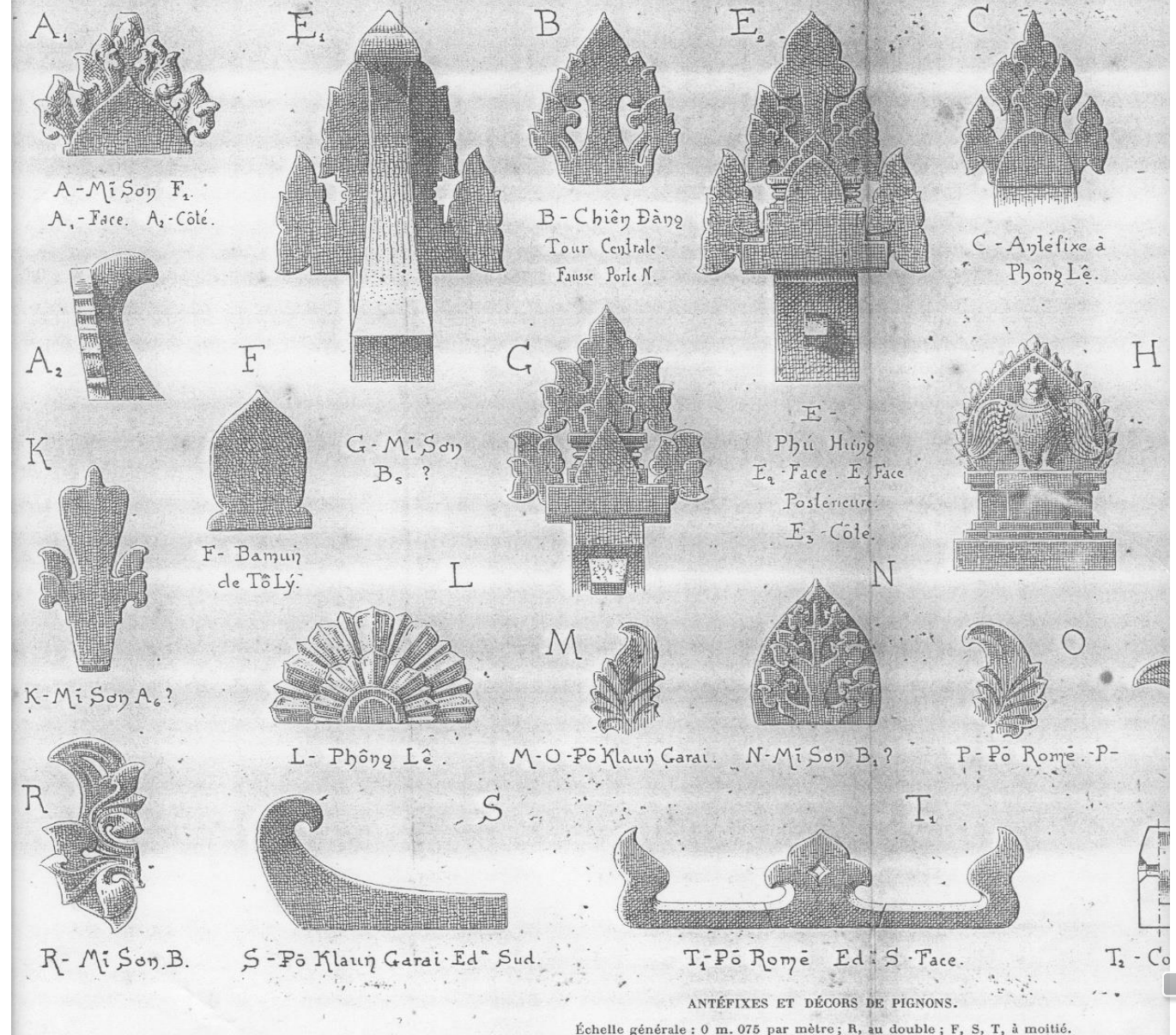
We must also emphasize that without one of these elements, we cannot have a complete set of documents for researching, preserving, and promoting the value of the monuments.



6. Action plans towards a Path for the Future

6.2. Inventory, objects, and inscriptions, digitization of all Cham sculptures

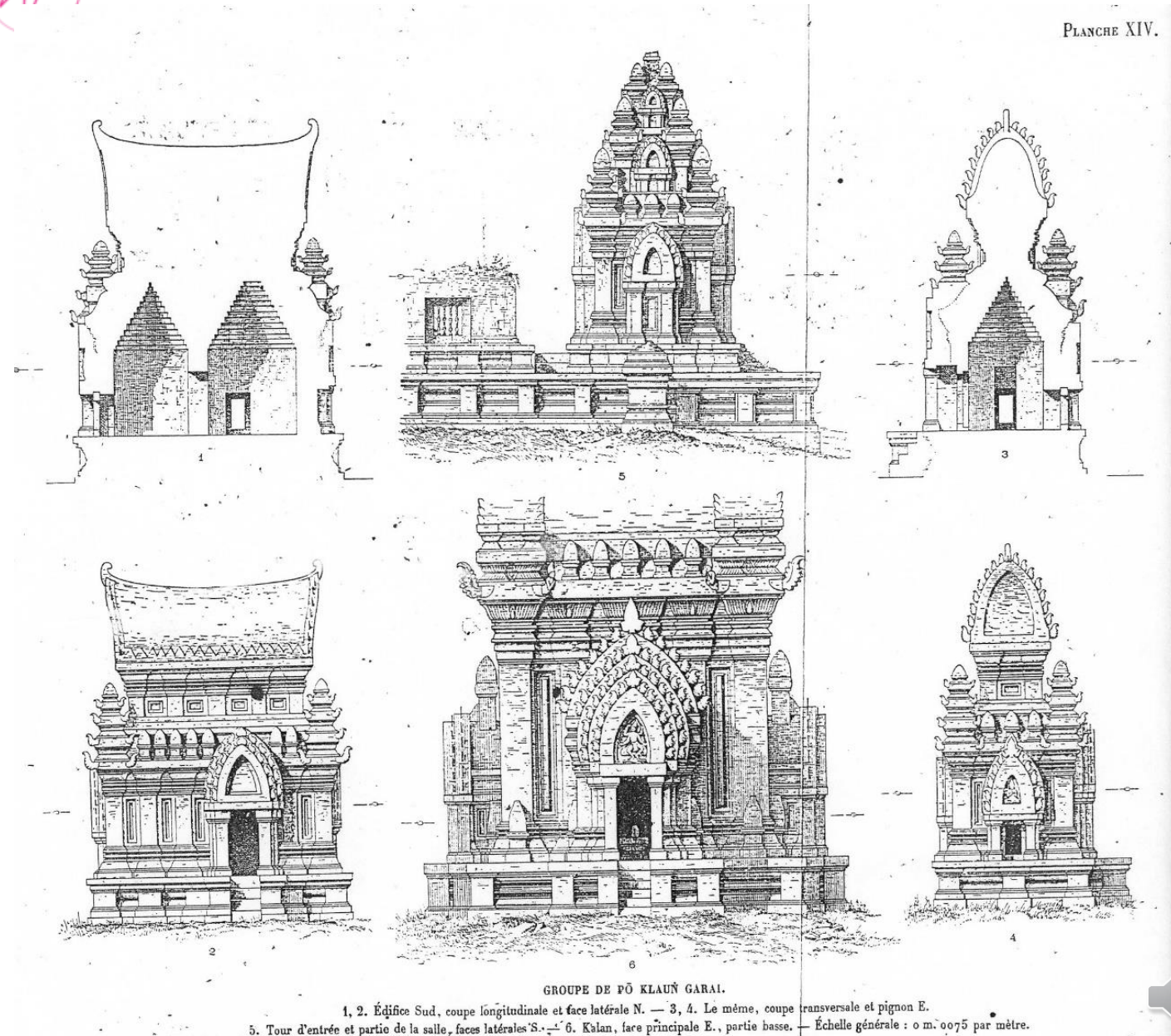
We have contemporary estimates of hundreds of thousands or even millions of small archaeological artifacts present at Cham heritage sites.



6. Action plans towards a Path for the Future

6.3. Plans preserving the monuments

- ✓ to establish a safety belt, to set up a bounded plan for the surrounding landscape of a site.
- ✓ We need much more periodic assessments of surfaces around sites, made by archaeologists, more limited excavations, and the establishment of an understanding of the impact of excavations in areas that are affected, especially with regard to the foundations of remaining structures.



6. Action plans towards a Path for the Future

6.4. Renovation of Cham museum and re-organization of managerial structure

- ✓ Our proposal would be to solicit input from all provincial and district level museums, national and international research institutes, and most importantly the Cham community.
- ✓ Yet the potentials of this new building and organization can only be realized if we begin to invest now in the concept of building a new museum upon the land in Đà Nẵng.



Henri Parmentier Museum in 1936.

Source: EFEO



In conclusion,

If we think that the study, conservation, and promotion of Cham cultural values must be further improved, it will be time for the Culture Departments of the provinces to take up the mantle of engaging in this process as well.

It is a transnational and global project, requiring engagement from organizations and experts at all levels.





*Thank
You*

