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## 11. Cam ritual vessels

By Prof. Dr. Anne-Valérie SCHWEYER

The Vietnamese Museum of History in Hồ Chí Minh, conserves magnificent examples of Cam metal ritual objects dating to the 10<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some bear inscriptions that help us discern their ceremonial use in ritual practice. They include dishes, offering plates and vases, bowls and vases for libation, incense-burners, and betel boxes. We will study the circumstances of their discovery and their deposition in the Museum. A more detailed study will then focus on both the inscriptions on the objects and an ethnographic account of how the different forms that evolved for ceremonies.

### 1. Discovery and conservation of Cam ritual vessels

These objects emerged from multiple sources – hidden caches unearthed in excavations, a royal family collection, donations. Before the historical events that shook Việt Nam in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, numerous objects had been unearthed that has been hidden during raids. Such caches are often called ‘treasures’. They are difficult to date for the Cam country in central Việt Nam underwent many periods of conflict when precious objects were removed from the sanctuaries and hidden to await a more peaceful period. Such could have been the case for objects of the ‘La Thọ treasure’ apparently buried in the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE in Điện Bàn district, Quảng Nam province.<sup>1</sup> Similarly for the objects conserved by descendants of the royal family, as in the royal deposit of Tĩnh Mỹ, conserved on the site of the former Cam capital of Bal Canar or Palei Canar on the Phan Rí plain. There are also objects without real provenance which were found by farmers and sold. Other ‘treasures’ have been identified, like that of La Thọ, or the one found in 1901<sup>2</sup> in the sanctuary of Po Klong Garai [Fig. 1], or the one found in sanctuary C at Mỹ Sơn, where in which a deity’s jewellery was hidden beside silver bowls.<sup>3</sup>



Fig. 1. Vases found in Po Klong Garai sanctuary in 1901: upper left a *vatā*, upper right a *ghaṭa*. *BEFEO* 1901 fig. 72, p. 409. Courtesy of the EFEO.

<sup>1</sup>‘Chronique’ *BEFEO* 1911: 471-2.

<sup>2</sup> Parmentier *BEFEO* 1901: 409-10: ‘This deposit held 18 metal pieces: a silver dish, 14 vases of the same kind, two gilt silver vases and one in gold.’

<sup>3</sup> Parmentier *BEFEO* 1903: 664-5.

The La Thọ treasure was discovered under piles of bricks from a former sanctuary. It contained a necklace made with 12 golden beads, a gold ring with sapphire, a silver dish, a silver plate and a small silver ewer. The 1911 photograph in Fig. 2 shows the plate with two fish [Cat. 38 a] and the ewer [Cat. 38 b].



Fig. 2. La Thọ silver objects found in 1911: top a plate or offering dish, below left a plate or *bhājana* and, below right a ewer or *kalāśa*. *BEFEO* 1911 fig.44, p.473. Courtesy of the EFEO.

Early in the 20th century, several deposits of precious objects were recorded in the provinces of Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận, there where the Cam traditions still exist, or on the high plateau. In their 1905<sup>4</sup> publication, Henri Parmentier and Eugène-Marie Durand, inventoried eight deposits protected by the Cams or their allies at Tịnh Mỹ /Bal Canar, in Bình Thuận, at Phước Đông/Mblang Kacak, Hậu Sanh/Thuận et Hữu Đức/Hamu Tanran in Ninh Thuận province and at Palei Cvah/Cuah, Lavang, Palei Praik/Praik Riyom and Kajong towards the plateau. Marcel Ner in 1930<sup>5</sup> and Nghiêm Thâm in 1957-59<sup>6</sup> enriched the descriptions. However, the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century decimated these former royal possessions; stolen or melted down, pieces in gold or silver are found only rarely today. The treasure said to be of **three kings** Po Klauñ Mah Nại and Po Klauñ Gahul,<sup>7</sup> the royal deposit of Tịnh Mỹ, comprised 22 articles in gold (vases, cups in many forms, tiaras and diadems) and eight in silver. According to the 1902<sup>8</sup> inventory, this was considered to be the property of a Cam princess, descended from a branch of the royal family. A photograph kept in Paris [Fig. 3] shows the descendants of the royal family posing with the most beautiful pieces, of which only four are known today.

<sup>4</sup> Parmentier and Durand *BEFEO* 1905: 1-46.

<sup>5</sup> *BEFEO* 1930: 552-76.

<sup>6</sup> Việt-nam Khảo-cổ tập san: 151-63.

<sup>7</sup> The first is identified as Po Mah Taha who, according to the royal Chronicle, reigned from 1622-27; the second, better known under the name Po Romé, was the son-in-law of the first. See Aymonier 1890 :151-152.

<sup>8</sup> The original inventory of the Tịnh Mỹ deposit is conserved in the archives of the EFEO in Paris (Parmentier et al. 19 April 1902).



Fig. 3. Silverware of the Tĩnh Mỹ /Bal Canar royal deposit. At the centre is a *vatā* [Cat. 37.a], placed on an offering stand [Cat. 37.c] and immediately in front an offerings vase [Cat. 37.d]. On the right of the table is an imposing betel vase [Cat. 37.b]. Photothèque EFEO no. 931.

The Cam metal vessels underwent the turbulent history of Việt Nam and studying them is difficult. When archaeological excavations brought the precious objects to light, they were deposited in the Museum of History in Hanoi<sup>9</sup> in 1953. Thus, pieces from the La Thọ treasure [Cat. 38 and 38a], the bowl and incense holder of Po Nagar in Nha Trang [Cat. 37 f et 37g) were conserved along with the three ‘beautiful pieces’ from the Tĩnh Mỹ deposit, which were offered to the Museum ‘in honour of the Cams’ in 1928 [Cat. 37a, 37b, 37d]. It was Jean-Yves Claeys who placed these last in Hanoi with an illustration [Fig. 4], which enables us to identify them. Most of these objects were transferred to the Museum in Hồ Chí Minh City in 1954, where they may be seen today.



Fig. 4. 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century silverware from the royal deposit of Tĩnh Mỹ. We see above the pieces Cat. 37.d and Cat. 37.d, bottom left and Cat. 37.a bottom right. *BEFEO* 28(1928), pl. XXVI A et B. Courtesy of the EFEO.

<sup>9</sup> Formerly the Musée Louis-Finot.

## 2. Cam ritual vessels

### a. Inscriptions

Some of the objects in the Museum bear inscriptions which offer information on both the deity honoured and the dedicator from **the** royal family. The texts usually take the form ‘offered by X or Y to divinity Z’, but sometimes there is only the name of the deity and the name of **the** king. The inscriptions<sup>10</sup> are the only means for naming the form of a vessel from these times, because no ritual, oral or written, has survived to help clearly identify the vessels. Names from the modern era suggest that ritual use has been profoundly modified for there is little correspondence, except for the *batā/vatā* that will be discussed below. The semantic evolution may be explained by linguistic influence: in earlier centuries Sanskrit was predominant in the Cam inscriptions, through the adoption of the *brāhmī* script from India. In modern Cam there is no remnant of Sanskrit, which is replaced by Malay or Vietnamese influence, dependent on the period when the words fixed themselves in the vocabulary.<sup>11</sup> The short list of objects with inscriptions in Sanskrit or Old Cam is in Annex 1.

Among the La Thø pieces, inscription C.143 [Fig. 5b] is inscribed on a dish [Cat. 38.a] which bears a motif of two fish in relief. [Fig. 5a]. The motif is typical Tang Chinese. The inscription under the dish has almost disappeared; only three syllables remain *ajñā po*, which are elements of a title of members of the royal family in the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. One can therefore suggest the dish was offered to the divinity of a temple by one close to the king.



Fig. 5a. Dish with fish motif [Cat 38.a] serving to make offerings for a divinity.

<sup>10</sup> All inscriptions are inventoried as follows: the letter C refers to the corpus of Cam inscriptions. This letter is followed by a number of the inscriptions listed either by Cœdès & Parmentier in 1923 for numbers C.1 to C.170, or in Cœdès 1937 for C.171 to C.200, or in Griffiths-Lepoutre 2008-9: 488-91 for C.201 to C.233.

<sup>11</sup> For example, among the ritual vessels, the word *kalaśa* for designating an ewer disappeared and was replaced by the word *halong*, see Moussay 1971: Index p.2, or *halauñ* Aymonier-Cabaton 1906: 520. Cabaton in 1901 and Aymonier-Cabaton in **1906** still indexed the use of the word *kalaih* (Cabaton 1901: 57; Aymonier-Cabaton : 68), but Moussay does not mention it in 1971; for dish or plate, *bhājana* was replaced by *thong hala*, *cabah* or *salaw*, idem, *ibid.*, p.31.



Fig. 5b. Inscription C.143 on the dish with fish [Cat. 38.a]. *BEFEO* 2008 :476, fig. III. 7.2. Courtesy of the EFEO.

A silver dish, in poor condition at discovery, has now disappeared. It bore inscription C. 14 [Fig. 6], with the deity name śrī Vanāntareśvara, the ‘Lord of the interior of the forest’.



Fig. 6. Silver dish from the La Thọ treasure bearing inscription C.144. Photothèque EFEO no. 01203.

Sanskrit inscription C. 145<sup>12</sup> is indited on a small jug or ewer [Fig. 7], whose spout is missing [Cat. 38.b]. It says: ‘To this blessed Vanāntareśvara, who is famous everywhere, the king of Campāpura [gives] of his own faith this silver ewer’. A king of a ‘kingdom of Campā’ therefore offered it to the ‘Lord of the interior of the forest’. The site where these three pieces of silverware were discovered has not been precisely identified<sup>13</sup> nor explored, but this enigmatic divinity could have been a local forest spirit erected for divine protection.



Fig. 7. Ewer BTLS.1295 [Cat. 38.b] from the La Thọ treasure.

<sup>12</sup> C.145 vanāntareśvarāyāsmāi śrīmate diśakīrttaye campāpurapati raupyam kalaśam śraddhayātmanah || Schweyer 2005: 297.

<sup>13</sup> The information given in *BEFEO* 1911: 471-2 are too summary for finding a sanctuary dedicated to this god.

Three silverware objects published in 1999, but now lost, are remarkable. The group includes a ewer, an incense holder and a tray datable to the 9th century CE. Two of the pieces found in Đồng Dương were offered by a king named Rudravarman to a divinity named Rudrasvayambhuveśvara. The small ewer [Fig. 8] bears the Sanskrit inscription C.205<sup>14</sup>, which says: ‘This silver ewer was donated by śrī Rudravarmadeva to śrī Rudrasvayambhuveśvara’.



Fig. 8. Silver ewer from Đồng Dương, Quảng Nam province, with inscription C.205. The foot and spout are modern. Photo Vu Kim Loc 1998.

C.206<sup>15</sup> is inscribed on a recipient which resembles a perfume burner or an incense-holder [Fig. 9] and reads: ‘śrī Rudravarmmadeva gave (...) with (its) holder’.



Fig.9. Incense holder or offering presenter from Đồng Dương with inscription C.206. The handle is modern. Photo Vu Kim Loc 1998.

<sup>14</sup> C.205 *śrīrudrasvayambhuveśvarāya rajatakalaśo yaṃ śrīrudravarmmadevena datta iti*: Schweyer 1999: 348-9.

<sup>15</sup> C.206 *tam imā ca dhūpādhāraṃ śrīrudravarmmadevo dattavān iti ||*: Schweyer 1999: 349 and Griffiths **et alii** 2008-9: 479.

The existence of these cult objects suggests that before the expansion of the Đòng Dương sanctuary, the grandfather of king Indravarman<sup>16</sup> had built a sanctuary to a divinity, a self-manifested form of Śiva/Rudra, to whose name he had added his own to show the link that united him to this protector god. The divinity<sup>17</sup>, probably in the form of a stone *liṅga*, had apparently emerged from the earth to manifest his interest in Rudravarman.

The admirable silver tray [Fig. 10] has the Sanskrit inscription C.207<sup>18</sup> that proclaims: ‘Happiness! To Blessed Śrī Bhadralingeśvara, this son of Śrī Bhadravarman, kṣatriya, which bears a name of good omen, for the fame of the essence of Bhṛsu, gave this silver dish out of devotion to him’.

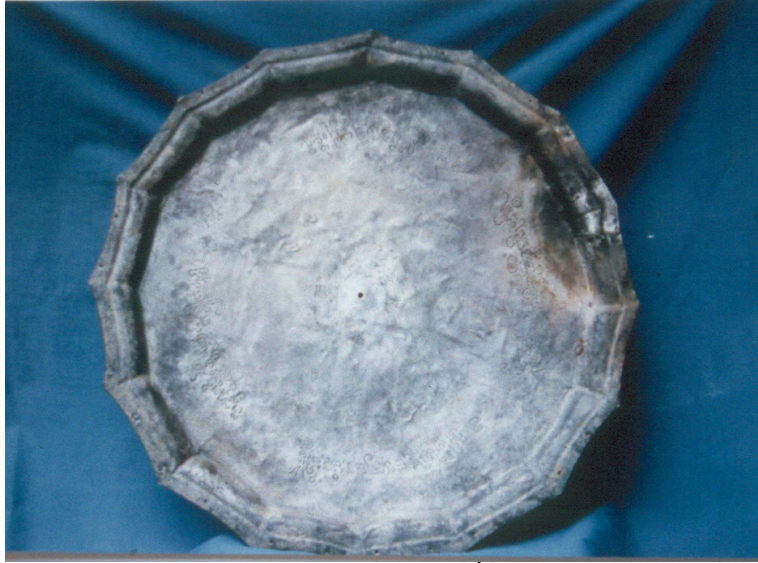


Fig. 10. Silver tray from the district of Đại Lộc, north of the Thu Bồn river, in Quảng Nam province. It bears inscription C.207. Photo Vu Kim Loc 1998.

Two further objects from the 12th century CE were dedicated to the goddess Po Nagar of Nha Trang were discovered when the sanctuary was excavated. A small bowl or lid [Fig. 11, Cat. 37.f] carries the Old Cam inscription C.118<sup>19</sup> saying: ‘The blessed king Śakrānta from Mandā-Vijaya gives (this) to the goddess Po Nagar in the year of the king of Śaka 1119 (1197 CE)’. It is an offering to the Po Nagar goddess from an otherwise unknown Cam king.

<sup>16</sup> On the dynasty of Indrapura, cf. Schweyer 1999: 345-355.

<sup>17</sup> On the god Śiva *svayambhu*, see Sanderson 2003-4: 410-421.

<sup>18</sup> C.207 *svasti // śrībhadraliṅgeśvarāya bhagavate śrībhadravarmmāṅgajo yaṃ bhaṭanāmadheyo yah kṣatriyo rajatabhājanam idam asmai bhṛsvātmakirttaye tadbhaktiyā dattavān iti* // Schweyer 1999: 349-50.

<sup>19</sup> C.118 *poṅ yān pu rāja bhagavanta oṅ śakrānta urān mandāvijaya vuh pak yān pu nagara śakarāja 1119*: Schweyer, 2005: 297-8.





Fig. 11. Small silver receptacle BTLS.1302 with inscription C.118 is dated to the late 12<sup>th</sup> century CE.

An incense-holder [Cat. 37.g, Fig. 12] bears inscription C.208<sup>20</sup> which says: ‘Majesty of majesties, the prince Pamā, Sir Dhiḥ, man of Rupaṅ, son of P. L. Śrī Devarāja, offered this incense-holder to the image of Parameśvarī [Durgā] in [the year] 1052 of the king of Śaka [1130 CE].’ In this case a crown prince in the 12<sup>th</sup> century offers a perfume holder to a goddess (probably Po Nagar).



Fig. 12. Incense-holder BTLS 24202 in silver with a 12th century inscription.

This small array of inscribed texts shows that ritual instruments were offered to divinities by kings or members of the court in exercising their cults. They also had a practical role. The inscription rendered visible to the god and the people the value of giving and the benefits for the donor: it played social role proclaiming the glory **if** the divinity and its generous donor.

<sup>20</sup> C.208 || *yān po ku di yā ciy pān pu dhiḥ urān rupaṅ anāk pu lyaṅ śrī devarāja vuḥ asaṅ nī pak yā parameśvarī rūpaṅ kāla śākarāja 1052*: Griffiths et alii 2008-9: 477-8.

## b. Types of vessels

Objects found include liquid containers for divinity libations, trays or plates for offerings and containers for burning incense. Their names are hardly known and have changed over time. In Old Cam we can recognise a great variety of ritual vessels in gold or in silver. They are categorised under the Sanskrit nouns *paribhoga* ‘cult utensils’ or *upabhoga* ‘objects of use’. They form the largest object group made of precious metals. These include the badges of divinity or royalty -- such as parasols, flywhisks, fans, palanquins, canes, swords with scabbard, *omkara*<sup>21</sup>-- or cult vessels. The indications of weight or value of vessels are often found in the Old Cam inscriptions but are very rare in the Sanskrit inscriptions where they appear only from the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE. But paradoxically most nouns recognised as distinguishing the forms of vessels are in Sanskrit.

It is thanks to the inscribed vessels now held in the museums that we can recognise certain types of vessels. The inscriptions in fact name numerous objects we can no longer identify today, because they have not been associated with any known forms. This absence strongly limits our knowledge of the old ritual vessels, for the utensils used today in Cam rituals appear less varied and have names one does not find in the inscriptions (with the notable exception of *batā/vatā*). It is however possible to distinguish water vases from trays or plates and censers (see Annex 2). A quick glance allows us to discern the ritual objects known in the inscriptions from the 8<sup>th</sup> - mid 13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, essentially in Quảng Nam and on the Po Nagar site in Nha Trang (Annex 3). We cannot however limit the diffusion of these objects to these findspots, as we know only a minute fractions of the objects in precious metal that could have been made and which were mostly pillaged and/or melted down.

## Water vases

The *kalaśa* is an ewer often mentioned in the inscriptions. In modern Cam it is called *kalaih*.<sup>22</sup> It is a water vase of small to medium size with or without a spout, which is still in use in India today, but which is not found in the later Cam treasures, even though they are mentioned in certain rituals.<sup>23</sup> It was used for pouring libation water into a larger receptacle. It was essential in the ceremonies. Whether the divinity honoured was a *liṅga* of Śiva, an anthropomorphic representation of the god or a simple sacred stone representing a local spirit, all the rituals included the ablution of the divinity with liquids drawn with an ewer from a larger receptacle. The ewer is often mentioned among the donations made to the gods by kings up to the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE: it was necessary for all ceremonies or rituals rendered to divinities.

<sup>21</sup> This is an object with the shape of the sacred syllable Om, used principally for coronations.

<sup>22</sup> Cabaton 1901: 57.

<sup>23</sup> Durand *BEFEO* 1907: 349: ‘during the royal ritual *mamun*, the high priest wears a kind of mitre called a *kanôm*. He takes in his left hand a small ewer with a wader bird’s neck called *kalaiç* ...’. On the *mamun* ritual practised by the Cams in Cambodia, cf. Stock *Udaya* 2007: 258-70.

Two ewers [Figs 7 and 8] with inscriptions written in Sanskrit using Old Cam characters<sup>24</sup> are called *kalaśa*. It is particularly precious because it is used to raise the libation liquid for pouring on the divine image. The *ghata* is a ewer of larger format. There is an image of one from the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE from the Đa Nghi site in Quảng Trị,<sup>25</sup> province that is like a symbol of fertility and abundance [Fig. 13].



Fig. 13 Sculpture representing a vase of abundance or *purnaghata* from Đa Nghi, in Quảng Trị. 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. Đà Nẵng Museum of Cam Sculpture.

One was recovered in an early 20<sup>th</sup> century excavation<sup>26</sup> at the Po Klong Garai site in Ninh Thuận province. It is now lost.



Fig. 14 Po Klong Garai treasure: golden vase with lid and chain. *BEFEO* 1901 fig. 73, p. 410. Courtesy of the EFEO.

The *kumbha* or *kunḍa* is another vessel for liquids. An 11<sup>th</sup> century inscription describes the *kumbha* as ‘a golden water vase from the place where the goddess is installed’. The vase itself was honoured as a divinity, as can be found today in India during the important *Lakṣmīpūja*.<sup>27</sup> The *bhr̥ṅgāra* appears to be a small ritual vessel. Although we have nothing to prove it, we may consider this form to be that of the small receptacle found in the Po Nagar sanctuary [Cat. 37.f,

<sup>24</sup> See inscriptions C.145 and C.205 above.

<sup>25</sup> *Zéphir* 2005: 179.

<sup>26</sup> It can be seen in the EFEO photographic archives under number 23037. The reference card says ‘a gold vase from Po Klaun Garai’ was deposited in the Louis Finot Museum as D.22.43.

<sup>27</sup> On the symbolic representation of Śiva and Parvatī by ‘pots of scented water, surrounded by a number of varied pots representing their escort gods (*parivāra[deva]*)’, cf. Filliozat 1981: 95.

Fig. 11. [above] has an inscription in Old Cam. Bowls of this kind [Fig. 15] were in widespread ritual use from the 17<sup>th</sup> century CE.



Fig. 15. Silver offering bowls. 18<sup>th</sup> century. Private collection. Author's photo.

One form used later is taken to be a water vase, a *batā*<sup>28</sup> or *vatā*. This is found in two Cam inscriptions from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>29</sup> It is mentioned in the description of a coronation ceremony<sup>30</sup>, where a cup of wine is poured into the silver *batā* by the priest. For G. Moussay<sup>31</sup>, all forms of ritual vessel are *patil* 'metal bowls', most of them identified as *pata* [Fig. 16].



Fig. 16. G. Moussay Dictionnaire Cam-Vietnamien-Français 1971 p. 269. Metal vases used in Phan Rang in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Author's photo.

<sup>28</sup> The noun *batā* is found in Parmentier-Durand 1905, section 'III. Vases' p. 14-28.

<sup>29</sup> Po Nagar inscriptions: C.30 A 1 from 1084 CE. Princess Garbhalaksmī gave to the goddess a gold *vatā* of 56 thil (more than 2 kg). C.30 A 3 the *mānsiai grāmapuravijaya* gave a silver *vatā* of 10 thei, (c. 380 gr.) Schweyer 2005: 88-91 and 93-4.

<sup>30</sup> Durand 1907: 348.

<sup>31</sup> Moussay 1971: 269-70.

The *batā* in the BTLS collection is from a royal deposit<sup>32</sup> and may be dated to the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It attests to the continuity of usage of an old form. Only few examples of silver *batā* are known, most of them are in museums. [Fig. 17].



Fig. 17. *Batā* in silver decorated with ‘garuts’ and ‘inögarais’. Museum of Phan Thiết, Bình Thuận province. Author’s photo.

## Trays

The *bhājana*, often mentioned in inscriptions, is a large plate or tray for offerings. Some have specific functions, for example for betel.<sup>33</sup> This is referred to in an inscription on an 18th century so-called ‘elephant foot vase’ [Cat. 37.b], which contained the necessary ingredients for making betel quids and offered a tray on top for offering them. Betel quids are important in hospitality. It served numerous moments in social life and also in court rituals, marriages and religious ceremonies. Archaeological sources, royal chronicles and oral histories attest to daily and ceremonial use. Three essential components are lime, areca nut and betel leaf and the necessary implements are scissors, a lime pot and spoon. The betel box had to be large enough to hold all this.

Other trays [Fig. 18] or plates [Fig. 5a] were used for simply placing offerings before the deity. Offering vessels with lids [Cat. 37.d and 37.e] only came into use from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps from Vietnamese influence as perhaps indicated by the recurrent lotus bud and petal motifs.

<sup>32</sup> Parmentier–Durand 1905: 20-22.

<sup>33</sup> A betel nut tray (*thong hala*) is mentioned in the Raja Praong ritual, see Sakaya 2012.



Fig. 18. Silver tray for offerings [Cat. 37.c] dating probably to the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## Perfume burners

Perfume burners or censers were long in use in Campā. The Cam kingdoms were known for their trading, their ports and the access they provided to the produce of the highlands. An exceptional product was eagle wood or aloe wood<sup>34</sup> which yielded a perfumed resin reserved for gods and kings and burnt in incense-holders [Figs 9 and 12].

In the Po Nagar inscription C.208,<sup>35</sup> the object offered is called *asañ*, '[incense] carrier', where, in the phrase *asā dhūpa*, the word *dhūpa* for 'incense' is taken as understood. The inscription C.206 of Đông Dương<sup>36</sup> uses the term *dhūpādhāra* = *dhūpa-adhāra* for incense carrier. These Sanskrit terms have disappeared from the modern language.

## Rituals in Cam society

Gold and silver vessels play important roles in a society. They are of historical as well as ethnographic interest because they permit the study of their roles in social groups, in political systems with kings, religious systems with gods and the rituals that honour them.

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<sup>34</sup> Eagle wood has various names which distinguish its fragrances: calambac, aloe wood, eagle wood, or in English *gharu wood* or *agarwood*. It was a luxury product sought for cosmetic or pharmacopoeia use, or as incense. It was called aloe wood or eagle wood dependent on whether it flowed or not (the best quality flowed completely).

<sup>35</sup> See Fig. 12.

<sup>36</sup> See Fig. 9.

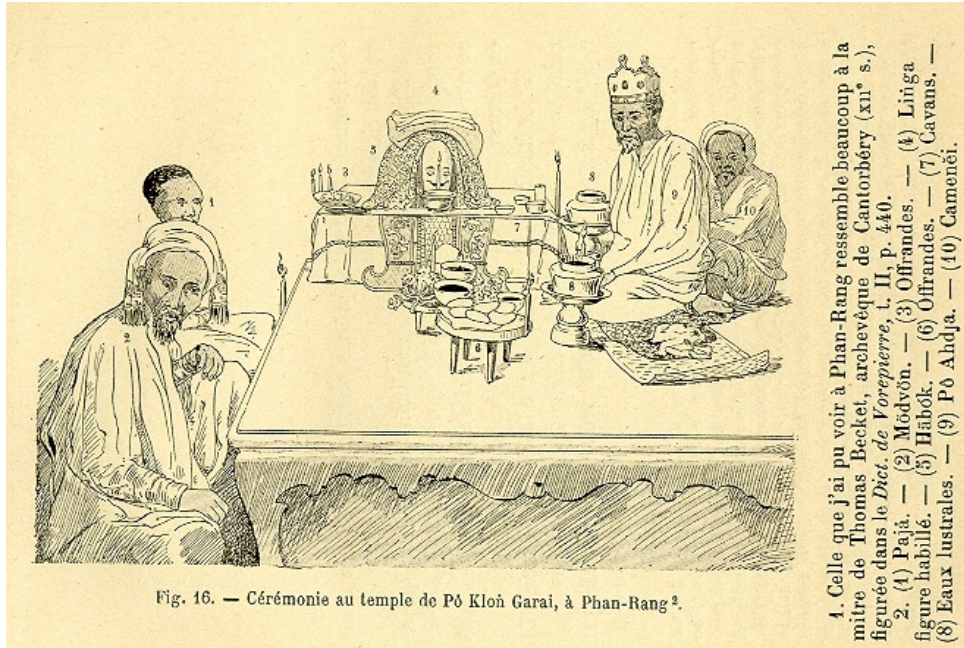


Fig. 19. Po Klong Garai temple ceremony in Cabaton 1901: 60. Author's photo.

Before the god in the form of a *linga*, are (7) small cups for alcohol (*cavan*) and, on supports, (8) the large metal vases (*batā*) holding the lustration water; in front a tray of offerings.

Prayers, chants and libations are offered to the divinity in such rituals, along with numerous offerings of food. There can be earthly dishes but also subtle and refined odours. Burning incense was a luxury reserved for gods and kings. Despite the disappearance of the Cam kingdom, the Cams conduct numerous rituals in their temples and in their houses such *Peh mbang yang* (the ceremony of opening doors in November of the Cam calendar), *Cuh yang yang apuei* (a fire sacrifice for the god in April), the *Katé* festival, *Cambur* (the ceremony for the goddess Po Ina Nagar) or *Raja Praong* (in honour of the ancestors).<sup>37</sup> Manuscripts set out clearly the sequence of actions for the priests to perform the rituals correctly. There are two orders of priests: the cult practitioners (*Paseh* or *Başeh*) and those responsible for organisation (*tamnei* or *camanei*):

The *Tchamenei*, priests of a lower rank than the *Bashêh*, are a kind of sexton or deacon charged with guarding the ornaments of the gods and the cult utensils: plates, bowls, cups, ewers, spittoons in bronze or silver. Their duty is to survey and maintain the temples. They hold the keys and open the doors when there are ceremonies. As officiants, they clothe and adorn the deities and make offerings after administering delicacies.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> On the rituals, see Sakaya 2012.

<sup>38</sup> Aymonier 1891: 44.

After attending certain ceremonies more than a century ago, Etienne Aymonier recorded these ritual vessels in use: ‘Metal ewers with spouts are placed on the *Baganratch*,<sup>39</sup> as well as vases and small metal cups for the ceremonial brandy. There are also perfume-burners...’<sup>40</sup>

Some ceremonies were performed for authorisation from the deity – for the right to consult the manuscripts, for example, or for the right to make copies of inscriptions engraved on the temple walls, or to take photos of the god. A special ritual was performed when Aymonier asked to make copies of the Po Klong Garai inscriptions:

All the assistants murmured prayers asking for the blessing of the deities and their authorisation for making rubbings of their inscriptions. The *Tchamenei*, taking a ewer in one hand and a lit candle in the other began his performance. From time to time he poured water into a vase. Setting down the ewer, he took a small plate in the form of a flared cup containing areca and betel and moved the candle over the plate. Then he stuck the candle in a plate of rice beside a larger candle. He again began his movements, offering all kinds of food, pouring a little water each time into the vase. Taking a branch of leaves as a sprinkler, he dipped it into the cups of lustral water to sprinkle the ewer and the food. Finally, taking a little rice in the tips of his fingers, he rolled it between thumb and fingers and stepped down from the platform after throwing a piece of eagle wood into the perfume burner.<sup>41</sup>

Such ceremonies appear to have changed little over time.



Fig. 20. Po Klong Chan temple ceremony<sup>42</sup> in the village of Danaw Panrang (Bàu Trúc, Ninh Thuận). The god of Po Klong Chan, in the form of a *lिंगa* with a face, inserted into a *yoni*, and beside him his consrt. During the Katé feast,

<sup>39</sup> A box containing ritual objects whose lid served as a plate. Cabaton 1901: 56.

<sup>40</sup> Aymonier 1891: 51.

<sup>41</sup> Aymonier 1891: 54.

<sup>42</sup> For the cult of Po Klong Chan, see Aymonier 1891: 56-7: ‘Numerous minor deities are celebrated in villages around. Po-Klong-Tchan is a recent example of how minor gods may figure in Cam cults. In 1868, two men from Panrang, were digging a canal near their village when they uncovered a carved stone. The villagers placed the rock under a shelter and made homage to it. Soon a woman declaring herself to be Padjao and the god speaking through her, told the people it was the king of Po-Klong-Tchan. A villager became the Kadhar of the new divinity and one of



they are washed and dressed. Before the altar are the ritual bowls for making offerings. In the rear are the libation vases: *batā* and *ghata*, as well as an earthenware jar. Image FB, accessed 28 July 2021.

Cam manuscript 125, conserved at the EFEO, which was probably written in Cam by Paul Mus during his stay in the Cam country from 1932-4, records the scheduling of offerings made during the two great Cam rituals of Katé and Cambur.

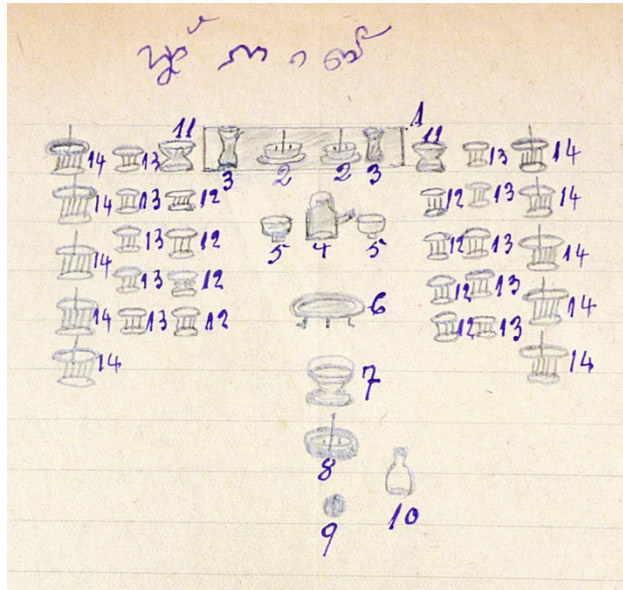


Fig. 21. Extract from Cam manuscript 125 conserved at the EFEO. Offerings ritual for the Katé ceremony. Probably written by Paul Mus in 1932-34. Courtesy of the EFEO.

## The Katé ritual

The ceremony takes place facing East and offerings are placed on a mat facing North. There are two betel boxes (*ndvan hulā*<sup>43</sup>) with candles (1) and two stands (*kanvan*) (2) with two ‘water bowls’ (*patil*<sup>44</sup> *Ayā*). In front of them are (3) a teapot (*patil Ayā caiy*), (4) two bowls (*pañin*<sup>45</sup> *mañum Ayā*), (5) a tray (*śalav*), (6) a bowl of incense called ‘bowl of fire’ (*jhai Apvei*), (7) a box (*tuk hop*<sup>46</sup>) with two cups for alcohol (*cavan*) and (8) eight candles, (9) a jar of alcohol (*kalauk alak*), (10) preceded by the officiants executing the rites. To the right and left there are numerous plates with food: two boxes of cakes (*thó*),<sup>47</sup> (11) eight plates with cakes (*cambah*) with plates

the gods who discovered it, his Tchamenei. These three priests or servants venerate the deity periodically at annual feasts. They also venerate the deity on behalf of people who fall ill.’

<sup>43</sup> *hulā* = *halā* ‘betel’.

<sup>44</sup> Aymonier-Cabaton : 259 metal bowl.

<sup>45</sup> Aymonier-Cabaton : 255, 259 et 299. These are probably small ceramic bowls rather than *patil*, which are larger and often in metal.

<sup>46</sup> The expression is formed from two words *tuk* forth plate and *hop* for the box. It could be a vase with feet (*tal takai lamân*) [Cat. 37.b] which served both as both a box and a plate for presenting the offering.

<sup>47</sup> The word is borrowed from Vietnamese.

with feet (*anaiḥ*<sup>48</sup> *maṅ takai*), (12) ten plates with bowls (*paṇin Ayā*) of chicken noodles and (13) ten plates with feet (*śalav takai*<sup>49</sup>) holding rice and meat.

The vocabulary has changed with the disappearance of Sanskrit and the inclusion of Malay and Vietnamese words, though it seems the usage of ritual objects long remained unchanged. So when Cabaton, in 1901, described ceremonies he saw he noted the use of vases with water or betel, which he called *hābok* or *kuṇḍa*, with ewers he called *kalaiḥ* – noting the word comes from the Sanskrit *kalāśa* ■ or boxes he called *thon*, ‘for carrying offerings on its lid’. Today the word *kalaiḥ* no longer means a sprinkler or a cruet.<sup>50</sup> the lustration ritual has been preserved but the small ewer discovered in the archaeology, has disappeared in favour of a small cup.



Fig. 22 On this tray of ceremonial objects, along with the rosary, the shell for summoning the divinity and the manuscripts on palm leaves (10), a footed bowl called *hābok* (1), ewers called *kalaiḥ* (4) and (8), small cups for alcohol (*cavan*) (5), plus a small cup for making libations (*bap*) (9), in Cabaton 1901: 57, fig. 10.

The testimony of Paul Mus in 1932-34 [fig. 21] shows how the cultural objects are retained even if their names have changed. The ewer is called a ‘water bowl’, the perfume burner a ‘fire bowl’, but boxes, bowls and trays are still used. In showing the diverse range of bowls (*pata*, *patil*) in 1971 [Fig. 16], Gérard Moussay suggested there were multiple uses, the importance of some being known only to priests, but their function endured.

<sup>48</sup> Aymonier-Cabaton: 13.

<sup>49</sup> *śalav takai* may be translated as ‘tray with feet’.

<sup>50</sup> Aymonier-Cabaton: 68.



Fig. 23. Po Klong Garay (Phan Rang, Ninh Thuận) Katé festival October 2005. The 11th century dancing Śiva is today called *ganuer matri* (chief guardian). He has been sprayed with water by the *camanei* (temple guardian). Such rituals persisted across the centuries in such sites. Photo: Agnès De Féo.

Our ethnographic excursion has shown how traditional ceremonies are conserved. Ritual practices in the course of which divine figures are lustrated appears to always be based on old texts transmitted from generation to generation in priestly families (*baseh*). The importance of these rituals is that they have permitted the Cam people to conserve the status of their great civilisation in the heart of modern Vietnam.

## Annex 1 Inscriptions

Inscription	Type d'objet	Nom de l'objet	dédicataire	dédicant	Provenance	Datation
C.143	plat en argent			ajñā po: un membre de la famille royale	La Tho, province de Quang Nam	10ème siècle
C.144	assiette en argent		śrī Vanāntareśvara		La Tho, province de Quang Nam	10ème siècle
C.145	aiguière en argent	kalaśa	śrī Vanāntareśvara	Campāpurapati: un roi	La Tho, province de Quang Nam	10ème siècle
C.118	bol en argent		yān pu nagara	rāja oñ śakrānta urāñ mandāvijaya :un roi	Po Nagar de Nha Trang	1197 CE
C.205	aiguière en argent	kalaśa	śrī Rudrasvayambhuveśvara	śrī Rudravarman: un roi		milieu du 9ème siècle
C.206	porte-encens en argent	dhūpādhāra		śrī Rudravarman: un roi		milieu du 9ème siècle
C.207	plat en argent	bhājana	śrī Bhadrālīṅgeśvara	le fils de śrī Bhadravarman: un membre de la famille royale		milieu du 9ème siècle
C.208	porte-encens en argent	asañ	yā parameśvarī	ciy pāñ pu dhiñ urāñ rupañ : un membre de la famille royale	Po Nagar de Nha Trang	1130 CE

## Annex 2 : Table of ritual objects identified in inscriptions with names and dates.

objet	nom	or	argent	matériau non précisé
aiguière	kalaśa	C.38 B en 784 EC; C.90 C en 1080 EC; C.82 en 1114 EC; C.92 A en 1165 EC; C.30 A3 en 1167 EC.	C.61 en 892 EC; C.145 fin du 9ème s.; C.205 fin du 9ème s.; C.142 B en 908 EC; C.30 B3 en 1050 EC; C.90 C en 1080EC.	
aiguière de grand format	ghaṭa	C.38 B en 784 EC; C.30 B3 en 1050 EC.		
pot, vase	kumbha		C.24 B en 801 EC.	
	batā, vatā, vat	C.30 A1 en 1084 EC.	C.30 A3 en 1183 EC.	
	bhṛṅgāra	C.38 B en 784 EC.	C.61 en 892 EC; C.142 B en 908 EC; C.30B3 en 1050 EC; C.31 A2 en 1064 EC.	
plat	bhājana	C.31 A2 en 1064 EC; C.30 B3 en 1050 EC; C.92 A en 1165 EC.	C.24 B en 801 EC.; C.207 fin du 9ème s.; C.142 B en 898 EC et 908 EC ; C.31 A2 en 1064 EC; C.30 A3 en 1183 EC.	C.31 A2 en 1064 EC; C.92 A en 1165 EC.
plateau	suvaṅk, suvok	C.6.1 en 1244 EC.		
brûle-parfums	asañ (dhūpa) dhūpādhāra	C.31 A2 en 1064 EC.	C.206 fin du 9ème s.; C.30 A1 en 1084 EC; C.208 en 1130 EC.	

## Annex 3: Table of ritual objects classed by date and provenance

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