

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### ***1-1 Historical archaeology of Bạch Mã Mountain***

This is a study of Bạch Mã Hill Station in Central Vietnam, or Old Bạch Mã (OBM) as I will refer to it. OBM was located just south of Huế, one of a series of hill stations established in high altitude locations across French Indochina, originally as climate retreats or sanatoria for the expatriate French colonisers. The plateau of Bạch Mã Mountain was surveyed and proposed for development by the French in 1932 but development on the plateau was limited before 1938. OBM reached its zenith during World War II (WWII), under the pro-Vichy, French colonial administration of Governor-General Admiral Jean Decoux and during the Japanese occupation of Indochina. It was abandoned by the French in 1945. This is an historical archaeology study that will examine the material fabric and the oral history of OBM within the context of the historical period in which it flourished. OBM is a distinctly colonial construct, developed at a point in time that represents the boundary between colonial French Indochina and an independent Vietnam. It is a symbol of that moment under a Vichy colonial administration when Vietnam stood at the crossroads between colonialism and postcolonialism. The story of OBM is explored through an archaeological perspective of intercultural social relations expressed in the cultural landscape and material fabric of OBM. This approach examines the material expression of social relations and is an approach that has not been used to explore colonial intercultural relations in Vietnam to date. It is used also to introduce to the study a greater focus on the Vietnamese people involved in OBM.

Archaeology provides opportunities to study aspects of colonial life that are unlikely to be incorporated in historical documents. One of the advantages of OBM is that it was created in a previously undeveloped environment. The summit plateau of Bạch Mã Mountain was completely forested when French engineer M. Girard surveyed it in 1932 (Kéo, 2001). As a constructed landscape, OBM became a cultural phenomenon that symbolised the French colonial system in Central Vietnam, largely separated from the material culture of the majority Vietnamese (J. Thomas, 2001:166). Recent developments in the archaeology of cultural landscapes have introduced new perspectives that recognise landscapes as the space in which people engage with the world and in which they create and sustain their own sense of their social identities

(Knapp & Ashmore, 1999:15). People build their houses, villages, holiday resorts in landscapes and express not only who they are in the material culture they create, but who they want others to be. The houses in which they lived are more than a ‘surface veneer’, they are a fundamental expression of themselves (Lucas, 2006:17). In stratified societies such as colonial Vietnam (Marr, 1971:23-32), the construction, maintenance and use of the built environment contributed to both the creation of inequality and the maintenance of the character of social stratification (Paynter, 1982:1). Furthermore, in Indochina the French used architecture as an expression of colonial policy and urban development as a means and end for political and economic policy (Wright, 1997:333, 339). In OBM the French were creating a colonial identity by transforming a landscape to represent their vision of a post WWII colonial Indochina (Kealhofer, 1999:58). OBM provides an opportunity to examine archaeologically, through their material culture, the French perspective of colonialism in Central Vietnam in the late colonial era. The archaeology provides the best way to explore issues of colonialism that focus on the Vietnamese, and Bạch Mã is much more significant to the Vietnamese of Central Vietnam, both nowadays and in the 1930s and 1940s, than it ever was to the French. The archaeology at Bạch Mã plateau also suggests something of the attitudes towards colonialism of those Vietnamese who participated in Bạch Mã in the postcolonial period.

OBM was abandoned by the French in March 1945 following a Japanese *coup de force* in which the French administration was overthrown following the liberation of France by allied forces in Europe. The summit plateau of Bạch Mã Mountain has experienced three subsequent occupation phases. From 1957 to *circa* 1963, during the administration of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), there was an unsuccessful attempt to re-establish horticultural ventures on the Bạch Mã plateau. Another occupation phase occurred from *circa* 1963 to 1975 and consisted of the military contest for control of the summits of Bạch Mã Mountain during the Second Indochina War. Together these two postcolonial occupations of the plateau resulted in OBM being left in ruins. The taphonomic processes at work on the relics of colonialism on Bạch Mã Mountain provide an additional perspective of the local people’s attitudes to colonialism. The third and current occupation by the administration of Bạch Mã National Park (BMNP) has seen the re-development of several of the old French villas as modern tourist accommodation while most of the

French villas continue to lie, decaying in the forest as ‘enchanted reflections’ of the past (Stoler, 2008:203).

European colonialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the postcolonial period following WWII have been crucial in shaping the modern world political and economic environment. Vietnam occupied a central place in that global theme, and in many ways Central Vietnam is still experiencing the effects of being at the very frontline of the battle to create the postcolonial, post-Cold War, world of the twenty-first century. The period in which OBM was developed was similarly significant in shaping postcolonial Central Vietnam. OBM played a consequential role in that development through its role in the growth of a nationalistic, Vietnamese consciousness among many young Vietnamese people, even while the French were still in residence. At the same time, OBM symbolised the essence of French colonialism in Central Vietnam. Its peak of development is also still within the living memory of some local people, people who themselves participated in the transformation of Vietnam into a modern, independent Southeast Asian state. It is a rare opportunity to find a location so rich in symbolism, so little changed in its context, and open to analysis using a range of methodologies.

Central Vietnam, including Bạch Mã, had a significant place in world politics from 1946 to 1975. However, it has not been central in the English language historical literature on Vietnam or in the intellectual consciousness of the West in the subsequent period. This seems to be a consequence of several local and international factors, including the history of colonialism in Indochina, the attitudes of France and the United States (US) towards Vietnam in the postcolonial period, and the priorities of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN). As a consequence of the general lack of historical information about Central Vietnam during the colonial occupation, at least in English, an archaeological study is not only appropriate and timely, but is also the only way to understand the historical significance of OBM. The lack of documented history combined with the developments over the last two or three decades within archaeology, of a range of techniques and approaches suitable to a colonial site in which cross-cultural influences are prominent, make OBM an excellent case-study in which to introduce this type of study to Vietnam.

## **1-2 Aims and objectives**

My introduction to Bạch Mã was in 2003 while working for the BMNP administration. The existence of the distinctly colonial cultural landscape at the summit plateau of Bạch Mã Mountain, represented in the ruins of OBM located within a distinctly Vietnamese natural environment, under Vietnamese management, led to my interest in the Vietnamese perspective of OBM. Where were the Vietnamese in this colonial landscape? Who were they and what had they been doing? My research approach here has followed a similar line, focusing on local issues, using local resources. An approach by BMNP to the French archives in 2001 had identified very little in the way of official documents relating to OBM. What was available provided an historical foundation for this site, but little in the way of understanding the French colonists' reasons for their investment in OBM. There may well be further relevant documentary evidence of OBM available through archives in France as well as in Vietnam. However, I made a conscious decision not to pursue a French perspective of OBM at this stage. Clearly, it is not possible to study a French colonial site without addressing the French, and the following study does examine French colonial history and policy in as much detail as reliance on secondary sources allows. My focus, however, is on the Vietnamese of Central Vietnam and their perspective of OBM, and of colonialism. I approach this study by addressing issues of Vietnamese collaboration and resistance in the colonial landscape of OBM, and in the local oral and documentary history. The term 'collaboration' is not used here in a derogatory sense. Collaboration and resistance are basic social relationships in intercultural interaction, particularly in a colonial environment (Robinson, 1972).

Given the resources locally available in Vietnam and in the English language literature on Vietnamese history and French colonial history, the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. The study aims to examine how Bạch Mã plateau developed over a series of occupations and abandonments, using archaeology and oral history to enhance the limited documentary record of the place and time.
2. It also aims to relate the development of OBM to the broader political and social environment to consider the nature and roles of twentieth century hill

- stations in Indochina and to explore the implications of the development of OBM for the maintenance of the French colonial occupation of Indochina.
3. It aims to explore the archaeological expression of intercultural social relationships in the hill station environment and compare that to the development of colonial policies on intercultural relations.
  4. Finally the study aims to consider what the archaeological and historical record of Bạch Mã plateau 1930-1991 suggests about the Vietnamese peoples' attitudes to the colonial occupation of Indochina.

To achieve these objectives the study first develops the socio-political, historical context in which OBM was developed. The development of OBM itself is discussed within this framework, including the oral history of Bạch Mã that highlights the involvement of the local Vietnamese community in OBM. That provides the basis for describing the material cultural heritage of the Bạch Mã plateau, including not only the architectural relics of colonial OBM, but also the material evidence of subsequent events on the plateau that provide some further insight into the Vietnamese perspective of OBM and colonialism.

The study begins, however, with an examination of hill stations more generally, when and where they developed, their functions, and why they have become symbols of European imperialism in Asia. OBM was one of seven hill stations developed by the French in Indochina, and the discussion of their development in the early twentieth-century precedes a description of the study area of OBM in Central Vietnam.

### ***1-3 Hill stations – what are they & why are they interesting?***

Hill stations were established throughout colonial Asia in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Most originated as military posts that soon became popular with European civilian colonists and developed into holiday and health resorts because of their cool climates. They developed perhaps to their greatest level in India under British rule, beginning in the early 1800s following a cholera epidemic between 1817-21, but several factors supported their growth (D. Kennedy, 1996:12). New hill stations were established in increasing numbers until the 1850s, so that by the end of the century there were at least sixty-five hill stations throughout India (Kennedy, 1996: 10), the largest number of any Asian country. In comparison, the Dutch had

twenty-three in the Dutch East Indies, there being ‘a hill station readily available to every town of any importance’; there were four in Burma; three in Malaya; and, eleven in China (Spencer & Thomas, 1948:645). These numbers are approximate because of problems with the definition of what constitutes a hill station. Kennedy (1996:10) noted the large range in both size and function of hill stations. The hill stations of India have attracted the most research interest by cultural geographers, and since they provided a model for the hill stations in Indochina it is worth noting a few aspects of the British hill stations that are clearly reflected in Indochina.

Judith Kenny (1995) presented a study of the symbolism involved in Britain’s hill stations. Quoting Edward Said’s (1978:55) observations on the discourse of imperialism, Kenny (1995:695) suggested that the hill stations of India supported the colonisers’ need to convince themselves of their difference from the people they dominated by enabling ‘the imperialist mind [to] intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing distance and difference’. Kenny (1995:698-702) also argued that colonial architectural styles were ‘manifestations of an interconnected structure of power and knowledge that informed colonialism everywhere’. Features, such as lakes, trees, flowers and vegetables, were introduced into the hill station landscape that emphasised the difference between the colonial rulers and the indigenous people. Architecture reflected buildings in the homeland, and occasionally even copied country estates from home. Public safety was used as a metaphor for control, and was used to justify a desire for a comfortable and prestigious environment for colonial residents. The essence of a British village was reinforced by segregating the Indian service workforce living area. Kanwar (1984) suggested that one of the important elements that gave the Indian hill stations an English character was the comparatively large number of European women. The imperial government, and several provincial governments in India, made substantial investments in the hill stations by transferring to them the seat of government during the summer months, which eventually extended to eight months out of the twelve, a practice which led to increasing dissatisfaction among the Indian people in the 1880s who saw the hill stations as symbols of the colonial administration’s disregard for the indigenous population (Kenny, 1995:701). The government responded with arguments about the difficulty for the European constitution in a tropical environment and for the greater efficiency of staff in the cooler climate.

Hill stations became an institution of British colonialism in India in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, until after WWI. Improved transport after the war, and the introduction of sponsored travel home to England in 1925, began the decline in popularity of hill stations among the British colonials. That led to increasing land sales to the Indian elite with an associated drop in land values (Kennedy, 1996:15). Elsewhere, hill stations predate their rise in India. In Java, for example, the Dutch established Buitenzorg (modern day Bogor) outside Batavia (modern-day Jakarta) at a very early date (Spencer & Thomas, 1948:641), and Penang Hill in British Malaya dates from around the turn of the nineteenth century (Aiken, 1987:426). Aiken's study of Penang Hill, as well as outlining the history of its development, gives an idea of the physical nature of the site, in particular the bungalows and their gardens. In contrast, the hill stations of Indochina were a later phenomenon, only commencing development at the beginning of the twentieth century and entering a period of rapid growth with the outbreak of WWII.

Hill stations historically performed four main functions. They were sanatoria where European residents in the tropics could recover from the ravages of the tropical climate, from conditions like malaria and dysentery, or to help them strengthen their constitutions against these ills. Indeed, it was as health resorts that most hill stations gained their civilian popularity, particularly in India where frontier military posts attracted increasing numbers of civilian visitors for recuperation and relaxation in the early nineteenth century. The second important function of hill stations was that they provided a cool environment, often with rolling, forested hills, reminiscent of the countryside in the colonisers' homeland. In this landscape the colonisers built villas and bungalows, hospitals, hotels and government buildings reminiscent of the architecture of the metropolis and more suitable to a temperate climate (Kanwar, 1984).

Hill stations' third function was that they also provided an exclusive social atmosphere where privileged people could relax, entertain and talk in relative privacy. Kennedy (1996: 6) eloquently described the colonisers' position in India, where, among the Indian masses in the cities and plains, they were expected to express a public face in accord with their position as colonial masters'. Kennedy (1996:6-7) noted that in contrast:

hill stations provided a public space where the British could simultaneously pursue their private interests. They provided a public space where the absolutist pretensions of imperial authority could be set aside and the necessity to conform to colonial normative codes could be tempered by the desire to satisfy personal needs. In this public sphere a bourgeois individualist sensibility could be cultivated and the subjective self expressed. Here sociability held sway, debate and gossip flowed freely, and men and women engaged in the personal transactions that became the principal bridge between the separate spheres.

Finally, hill stations had an important political function. Many hill stations developed out of frontier military bases or camps, and generally retained this function as the civilian presence developed. In India and Java they quickly developed into administrative centres. The British established their administrative summer capital for India at Simla and at least four other Indian provinces also moved their administrative functions for at least part of the year to cooler highland centres including Darjeeling, Poona and Ootacamund (Kenny, 1995:699). Van Imhoff, the Dutch Governor-General of the East Indies established his permanent residence and headquarters at Buitenzorg sixty kilometres from Batavia in 1744 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1911 V4, 770). Hill stations became symbols of colonial dominance over the teeming masses of the plains, and access for the indigenous population was limited to elite collaborators and the domestic staff and labourers on whom the colonial elites depended.

This brief review of the history and function of hill stations is intended to underline their significance to modern European colonialism generally, and in Asia in particular. The British hill stations in India provided the model for the French in Indochina. Despite the many similarities between British and French imperialism there are also many differences, as there are between India and Indochina. The hill stations of Indochina were developed a century after those in India and an understanding of the significance of OBM can only be gained by considering it in its own place and time.

### **1-3-1 The hill stations of Indochina**

Altitude therapy and hydrotherapy were significant elements of the French colonial venture for most of the nineteenth century. In particular, the Vichy spas in France were frequented by repatriated colonials, and high altitude mineral spas were popular in several French colonies (Madagascar, Reunion, Tunisia) leading up to the twentieth



century (Jennings, 2006). In Indochina, hill stations developed more slowly and many French residents from Cochinchina who could not afford frequent trips home, visited spas and hill resorts in Java or Japan. People from Hanoi in the north tended to travel to Kunming in southwest China at the end of the French Haiphong-Yunnan railway (Spencer & Thomas, 1948:645,648). Perhaps part of the reason that they developed more slowly was the absence of volcanic, mineral hot-springs in the mountains of Indochina so that the spring water in the mountain resorts was not perceived to be as beneficial as the spas of Vichy or of some of the volcanic island colonies such as Madagascar or Reunion (Jennings, 2006:53).

In the last years of the nineteenth century, Governor-General Paul Doumer (1897-1902) recognised the need for local climate relief stations (*stations climatique*) for European colonists and approved the development of Đà Lạt on the Lang Bian Plateau northeast of Saigon in 1897 (Gaide, 1931). The Lang Bian plateau had been identified as a suitable site a few years earlier by an explorer, Doctor Alexandre Yersin, who under Doumer's direction planned the development of Đà Lạt based on the Indian hill stations of Simla and Darjeeling, but 'improved' to replicate France (Jennings, 2003:162, 165). The early years of the twentieth century saw proposals for several other locations, including coastal resorts. Beach resorts at Cape St Jacques (now Vũng Tàu), south of Saigon, and Sầm Sơn near Haiphong in the north, however, had early problems with typhoons as well as being susceptible to the usual health problems associated with the plains, such as diarrhoea and dysentery. As such, they were soon abandoned (Gaide, 1931). Hill stations at Tam Đảo (1905) near Hanoi, and Bana (1902) near Tourane (now Đà Nẵng) in Central Vietnam, were established in the early years of the twentieth century. Bokor in Cambodia was controversially developed in the mid 1920s (600 forced prison-labourers died during the construction of its access road) (Chandler, 1996). Sa Pa, near the Chinese border in northern Vietnam was established *circa* 1922 (Florence & Storey, 2001:280). There was, however, little development in these centres until the late 1930s. Bạch Mã was initially surveyed in 1932, but the global economic crisis of the early 1930s retarded its initial development. Ba Vi was another hill station outside Hanoi, possibly established around the same time as Bạch Mã. Ba Vi was the location of a training camp for young men during WWII called the Notre-Dame du Bavi which Jennings

noted was an amalgam of hill station and medieval monastery (Jennings, 2001:195).

Map 1-1 shows the general locations of the seven hill stations of Indochina.



**Map 1-1** General location of the seven hill stations established in Indochina by 1945. (original map copied from [www.lib.utexas.edu](http://www.lib.utexas.edu))

Road and rail links to Đà Lạt were completed respectively in 1928 and 1933 (Robequain, 1944:93-4). Development there was also limited until the late 1930s, despite Doumer’s original proposal to establish Đà Lạt as the administrative centre of Indochina, a plan revived by Governor-General Maurice Long (1920-1922) (Wright, 1991:228). The completion of the opulent Lang Bian Palace Hotel in 1922 also failed to stimulate early development (Jennings, 2003:166). In Central Vietnam, road links to the hill stations at Bạch Mã and Bana were not completed until 1938. With the

advent of WWII, it became impossible for the French to return to France on leave. Thus, for the French residents of Indochina internal travel within the Indochinese Union became increasingly popular for the first time (Hardy, 2005:51). In 1941 the Vichy government recognised the importance of colonial hill stations for maintaining health and issued a decree that allowed for administrators stranded in the colonies to take paid leave in local spas and health resorts (Jennings, 2006:136). This provided another impetus to their rapid development, and the hill stations in Indochina blossomed.

This support from the *metropole* aided Governor-General Decoux's own great plans for Đà Lạt and spurred development there. In 1943 he renewed plans to establish the main administrative centre of Indochina in Đà Lạt (Decoux, 1949:401), and he was responsible for a model housing project called Cité Jean Decoux in the northern part of Đà Lạt (Jennings, 2003:190). In 1943 he used Đà Lạt as the site of his own investiture as 'Prince Protector of the Empire' (Decoux, 1949:144). Jennings (2006:2-3) noted that the French hill stations generally were, 'oases of cultural Frenchness in the tropics...[and that these] sites of leisure and power were certainly at the very heart of the French empire'.

#### **1-4 The study area**

OBM was located in Central Vietnam, or as it was during the colonial era, central Annam. This section will first describe Annam in relation to its position within the Union of French Indochina with the objective of positioning the study area within the region as well as introducing and defining several geographical references useful for the following discussion. That is followed by a description of Huế, the main population centre that was serviced by OBM, and its nearby neighbour Tourane (Đà Nẵng). This leads to a description of BMNP which was established to conserve the natural environment around Bạch Mã Mountain, on top of which OBM was built. This overview of the study area concludes with a brief description of the environmental characteristics of the summit plateau on which OBM was established.

##### **1-4-1 Annam in French Indochina**

French Indochina incorporated five *pays* (French term for a country or district), Tonkin, Cochinchina, Annam, Cambodia and Laos. It also included a small territorial

concession in southern China called Guongchouwan (see Map 0-1 on p. v). Table 1-1 provides a comparison of the area and population in the five *pays* and Guongchouwan.

**Table 1-1 Comparative details of the pays of French Indochina**

Region ( <i>Pays</i> )	Area (Sq. Kms)	Total Population	European Population	Population density per km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Tonkin</b>	116,000	8,700,000	18,171	75
<b>Annam</b>	146,660	5,656,000	4982	38
<b>Cochinchina</b>	65,000	4,616,000	16,084	71
<b>Cambodia</b>	180,200	3,046,000	2534	17
<b>Laos</b>	321,200	1,012,000	574	4
<b>Guangchouwan</b>	1200	211,000	241	176
<b>Total</b>	23,030,000	738,160	42,586	

Areas from Ennis 1936:1, population figures from Robequain 1944:21 relate to census figures from 1937, population figs for Guongchouwan from Ennis 1936:2

As part of the colonisation process Vietnam was divided into three *pays*, Tonkin, Cochinchina and Annam. The French Indochina region of Annam has been referred to as Central Vietnam since the reunification of Vietnam in 1975, although it no longer had any formal administrative distinction within the DRVN. Central Vietnam is used in this thesis to avoid the confusion stemming from the colonial practice of referring to the Vietnamese from all three *pays* as Annamites. In this thesis, references to Central Vietnam generally refer to the area around Huế and Đà Nẵng, which was the major centre of colonial occupation in Annam, and the region serviced by OBM and the neighbouring hill station, Bana, outside Tourane.

Tonkin was the northern-most Vietnamese *pays*, incorporating the Red River Delta and its capital at Hanoi. Cochinchina in the south was the first *pays* to be colonised by the French in 1862 and included the Mekong River Delta. Saigon was the capital of Cochinchina, and between 1954 and 1975 also of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). Following the reunification of Vietnam in 1975, Saigon was renamed Hồ Chí Minh City (HCMC) in honour of Vietnam's father of independence. Nowadays in Vietnam, both names are commonly used. In this thesis Saigon is used for the period before 1975 and HCMC for the post-reunification period. Annam, the third Vietnamese *pays*, links the north and south. It is the largest of the three Vietnamese *pays* in area and compares with the other two in population size. It is distinguished by its unique geography, extending about 1500 kilometres from north to south, while extending only about 50 kilometres from east to west at its narrowest point, in the

vicinity of Bạch Mã. The region is characterised by a narrow coastal strip with numerous small and distinct estuaries. The soils are relatively poor except in the limited coastal plains and small deltas. The Truong Son Cordillera, a mountain chain that stretches from the southern Himalayas, down the eastern side of mainland Southeast Asia, provided the western border of Annam with Laos in the northern half of the *pays*, north of Đà Nẵng, and continues parallel to the coast to the south. South of Đà Nẵng the border with Laos and Cambodia diverges further west from the coast so that access to the red soils of the southern highlands became a focus for plantation development for Annam in the colonial period.

### **1-4-2 Hué City and Đà Nẵng**

OBM was established by, and for, the French colonial population of Hué, the royal capital of Vietnam from 1802 until the end of the Nguyễn Imperial Dynasty in 1945. Hué was the capital of the Protectorate of Annam under the French colonial regime from 1883 until their departure in 1954 and is now the capital of Thừa Thiên - Hué Province in Central Vietnam within the DRVN. In the 1990s, Hué was recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for its significant architectural heritage and listed on the World Heritage Register. Hué is situated on the banks of the Perfume River (Sông Hương) a few kilometres from the coast. The Perfume River provides an umbilical link between Hué and Bạch Mã Mountain where one of its tributaries rises.

Hué suffered considerably in the post-WWII period. In 1946-47 the city suffered extensive damage when the French retook the city from the Việt Minh. At that time almost all the collections of the Musée Khai Dinh (the Imperial Museum) were lost, as was the case also at the celebrated Musée Henri Parmentier in Tourane, which had been a centre for the study of the Cham civilisation (Thompson & Adloff, 1947:415). Twenty-one years later during the Tết offensive of 1968, the turning point in the Second Indochina War (referred to in Vietnam as the American War and in the west as the Vietnam War), the Imperial City in Hué was occupied by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) for more than a month, longer than any other city in South Vietnam. The Imperial City, or Citadel, incorporated the Vietnamese emperor's official residence and the centre of the imperial government. It was the scene of street-by-street, hand-to-hand fighting throughout February 1968, that wrought further



destruction on the former imperial capital (Hammel, 1991). These postcolonial traumas are at least partly responsible for the lack of documentary records for the French colonial period in Annam.

Map 1-2 shows Bạch Mã Mountain, located about forty kilometres south of Huế and about sixty kilometres north of Đà Nẵng, which is referred to as Tourane for the period before 1954. Tourane was the second centre of French colonial population in Central Vietnam. It incorporated the only port facilities in the vicinity of the imperial capital. Đà Nẵng is separated from Huế and Bạch Mã by the Hải Vân Pass which forms a geographic and climatic boundary between north and south Vietnam as well as an ecological and cultural transition zone.



Map 1-2 Map of Central Vietnam showing the coast from Huế to Đà Nẵng. (Map copied from Vietnam, International Travel Maps 2003)

Map 1-2 also shows the sixteenth parallel of latitude south of Đà Nẵng which runs almost through Bana Hill Station west of Đà Nẵng. This marked the boundary

between the Chinese and British forces sent to accept the Japanese surrender in September 1945. About one hundred kilometres north of Huế, the seventeenth parallel marks the boundary between North and South Vietnam set at the Geneva conference in 1954, following the French defeat at Điện Biên Phủ.

### **1-4-3 Bạch Mã National Park**

BMNP is one of a series of national parks created in Vietnam since 1991. BMNP incorporates Bạch Mã Mountain and the site of OBM. BMNP was expanded in 2007 to incorporate more than 40,000 hectares crossing the boundary between Thừa Thiên - Huế Province and Quảng Nam province to the south. The park is situated approximately half way between Huế and Đà Nẵng. The park's entrance and administration centre lie about forty kilometres south of Huế City, and only three kilometres west of National Highway 1 where it passes through Cầu Hai Village in Phú Lộc District.

BMNP's environmental significance stems from its location near the geographical boundary between northern and southern Vietnam, where the Truong Son Cordillera meets the sea at the Hải Vân Pass. BMNP provides protection for the last forested corridor that joins the coast to the extensively forested Truong Son range. Its location at a geographical boundary means that it supports a diverse flora and fauna with representatives of both northern and southern species, as well as a number of endemic species (Anonymous, 1990).

BMNP takes its name from Bạch Mã Mountain (*Núi Bạch Mã*) which forms the central core of the original national park. The summit of Bạch Mã Mountain overlooks the coast and a narrow coastal plain, and rises to an altitude of about 1450 metres above sea level (masl). This altitude provides for an increased natural diversity. The forest above about 900masl is subtropical evergreen monsoon forest while the lower slopes are occupied by tropical monsoon forest. The area is subject to severe weather due to its proximity to the coast where it receives the full force of periodic typhoons that savage the Central Vietnamese coast, most recently in 2006 when Typhoon Xangsane caused the deaths of more than seventy people in Đà Nẵng and extensive damage to the forests and infrastructure of BMNP. The summit of

Bạch Mã Mountain is reputed to be one of the wettest locations in Vietnam with an average rainfall of about 8000mm (Keo 2001).

The ruins of OBM create both opportunities and challenges for the national park management. They are a source of interest for tourism and of income for the national park. Local and international visitors see the future redevelopment of the hill station site differently. Local government would like to increase tourism development on Bạch Mã Mountain plateau, such that in recent years it has been the subject of proposals for hotel developments, a casino, condominiums and a Buddhist temple. The summit plateau has a different level of environmental protection within the national park that allows for this development. Conservation interests see the need to limit development on the plateau to protect the national park as a whole.

#### **1-4-4 Bạch Mã Mountain plateau**

OBM was situated on a plateau at the top of Bạch Mã Mountain that incorporates about three hundred hectares of land above 1200masl. The plateau is characterised by three peaks between 1400-1450masl, connected by a ridge along the northern edge of the plateau that overlooks the narrow coastal plain and Cầu Hai Village. The plateau slopes to the southwest with a series of spurs and gullies to an area of relatively low relief in the southwest part of the plateau. Several streams that drain the northern ridge combine into a single stream that leaves the plateau via a two-to-three hundred metre high waterfall on the southwest edge of the plateau. Access to the plateau is via a single road that extends about eighteen kilometres from Cầu Hai Village, via a series of ridges and cuttings to the summit of Bạch Mã Mountain.

#### **1-5 Outline of the thesis**

The first part of this thesis provides the broad context for the study of OBM. A more detailed history of Bạch Mã plateau appears later in Chapter 6, followed by the description of the material culture within the plateau in Chapter 7. Chapter 2 provides the broad historical context for the development of OBM. It commences with an overview of the French colonial occupation of Central Vietnam (1883-1954) followed by consideration of the major global influences that helped shape the social structure of Indochina in the early twentieth century. The 1930s was a critical period in French Indochina's development, with the impact of the Great Depression, growing international political instability, and growing nationalist unrest throughout Indochina



that had a profound influence on the social relations between the French and Vietnamese in the late 1930s. With the beginning of WWII, the political, economic and social environment drastically changed as Indochina was occupied by the Japanese, but remained under French administrative control. The post-WWII period is also reviewed briefly in Chapter 2 to provide the context for the developments at Bach Mã in the postcolonial period. The period following the end of the First Indochina War (1946-1954) and the withdrawal of the French from North Vietnam is referred to as the postcolonial period in this thesis.

The phenomenon of colonialism, and in particular European colonialism of the nineteenth and twentieth century, has attracted considerable thought and debate for more than a century, and numerous theories have been developed to explain its growth and decline. Chapter 3 reviews the main theories of imperialism with a focus on the later ideas of Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher who argued for a greater emphasis within studies of imperialism on the role of indigenous people in the maintenance of colonial rule. That is followed by a discussion of a debate that developed among French colonialists in the late nineteenth century as to the appropriateness of the colonial policies of ‘assimilation’ versus ‘association’ in the relationship between the coloniser and colonised. This debate helped shape French colonial policy from the last decade of the nineteenth century until the end of WWII.

Chapter 4 reviews the archaeological themes that underpin the analysis of the material culture of OBM. Considerable archaeological work has been undertaken in the study of colonialism through the material record left at a range of colonial sites.

Archaeologists have argued for many years that not only does archaeology provide a perspective of past lives that is unlikely to be present in the historical record by helping to establish the voice of the disenfranchised, but also that the material record is useful for challenging some of the historical assumptions based on the documentary record created by dominant social groups. Ceramics have been a useful archaeological indicator of cultural presence and interaction. Techniques have also been developed to understand the social forces that underlie the creation of the archaeological record. Chapter 4 concludes with a review of the human influence in archaeological site formation or taphonomic processes.

Chapter 5 presents the sources and research methods for the study. It begins with a review of the historical sources on which the history of Bạch Mã is based. It introduces a map of OBM that formed the basis for the field survey of individual structures. A range of techniques were employed in the study of OBM, including field recording of sites, use of local historical sources and the oral history of some of the surviving participants present at OBM in the 1940s. A number of significant environmental constraints influenced the nature of the study and these are also discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 brings the focus of the study to Central Vietnam and OBM. It begins with a comparison of Bạch Mã with Bana Hill Station developed outside Tourane. One of the most significant sources for gaining an understanding of the community at OBM is the map of OBM introduced in Chapter 5 dating from *circa* 1943 as OBM reached its peak of development. The chapter also details the oral history of OBM collected among local Vietnamese people.

Chapter 7 documents the nature of the archaeological record of the Bạch Mã plateau. The study area was divided into a series of analytical zones, based principally on landscape features, and the results are presented for each zone. The material record is described in relation to three phases of occupation, the French period represented mainly by architectural sites now in ruins, a postcolonial phase represented by an assemblage of Vietnamese ceramic bowls, and the war damage and war relics that date from the Second Indochina War (1963-1975). These events subsequent to the development of OBM, are included to help understand the site formation and taphonomic processes that have contributed to the nature of the site.

Chapter 8 integrates the evidence from the Bạch Mã plateau, archaeological, historical and oral, to address each of the objectives of the study detailed earlier in this chapter. The conclusion to the thesis, Chapter 9, provides a brief overview of the study and considers how OBM contributes to an understanding of colonialism in Central Vietnam, particularly as it was experienced by the Vietnamese.

The thesis includes four appendices. Appendix A presents historical information including a timeline that conceptualises the development of OBM within the main

historical events in Vietnam as well as internationally. It also includes a list of the Governor-Generals of Indochina and their terms, and a copy of the letter from the French archives at Aix-en-Provence detailing the results of an initial search for records associated with OBM. Appendix B includes a translation of the paper by Thân Trọng Ninh (Thân Trọng Ninh, 2002) from which the term Old Bach Ma (OBM) was adopted to signify the historical French hill station. The original Vietnamese paper was translated by Nguyễn Thị Diệu Vân of Huế and edited by Thân Trọng Ninh personally. It also includes transcriptions and translations of several oral histories. Appendix C includes site plans and photos of the recorded architectural sites at the Bạch Mã plateau, organised in the same analytical zones as they are discussed in Chapter 7. Appendix D presents photos of the kitchen ceramics recorded during the field survey, along with details of size and the location where they were collected.

## Chapter 2. Colonial history of Central Vietnam

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to outline the broad political and economic environment in which Central Vietnam was situated leading up to, and during, the 1930s and early 1940s when OBM was developed. It also provides a brief overview of the course of Vietnamese history up to 1991 when BMNP was formally established and the present occupation of Bạch Mã Mountain began. The focus of this study is on the development of OBM between 1932 and 1945, but the archaeological record of OBM has been shaped by events and people who occupied Bạch Mã Mountain in the postcolonial period and it is therefore necessary to understand subsequent events in order to interpret the colonial period. Unfortunately, there is no concise history of Annam available in English for this period. The objective in this chapter is, however, to outline the broader national and international events and forces to consider how they may have impacted on and influenced the people and events in Central Vietnam. The chapter begins with a commentary on the sources used. This is followed by a brief outline of how the French established control of Vietnam's imperial capital, Huế, in 1883, and an examination of the early twentieth century with reference in particular to the state of the French colonial venture in the 1920s — the decade leading up to the establishment of OBM.

The story of OBM from a French colonial perspective began in 1932. The 1930s is recognised as the apogee of the French colonial empire reflected in the Colonial Exhibition in Paris in 1931 that showcased their colonial possessions to the French people (Cooper, 2001:65). The years 1930 and 1931 were also a watershed in respect to Vietnamese nationalism (Aldrich, 1996:271-2). Dissatisfaction among the Vietnamese was exacerbated by the global financial crisis of 1929 – 1934. This 'Great Depression' had a significant effect in the export oriented economy that the French were developing in Indochina. This discussion will outline the events that unfolded in Vietnam *circa* 1930 and then focus on the nature of intercultural relations between the French and Vietnamese in the 1930s as the world moved towards WWII. WWII stimulated the florescence of OBM. Central Vietnam was perhaps less influenced than its neighbours by the events in Indochina leading up to, and during, WWII, however, they did have a profound influence on those who invested heavily in

OBM, the French community in Huế. OBM was abandoned in 1945, so this chapter includes a review of the dramatic events in Huế in March 1945 when the French were finally overthrown by the Japanese. Following the *coup*, Huế briefly became the imperial capital again under a pro-Japanese government until the Japanese surrender in August and Hồ Chí Minh's declaration of Vietnamese independence on 2 September 1945. When the French returned in 1946, expecting to resume their colonial mastery after Vietnam had already claimed its independence, the country dissolved into the First Indochina War (1946-1954). That concluded with the division of the country into North and South Vietnam at the seventeenth parallel of latitude. Bạch Mã Mountain was reoccupied, initially by the Vietnamese in 1957 and later by both North and South military forces during the Second Indochina War (1963-1973). These postcolonial occupations had a profound effect on the character of the Bạch Mã Mountain plateau. This chapter provides a brief overview of the period up to 1991 when Bạch Mã National Park was established. The chapter concludes by noting that Bạch Mã Mountain has been a witness to many of the major social and political events of the twentieth century that have contributed to the development of modern Central Vietnam.

The general lack of information about Central Vietnam in the early twentieth century is not a limiting factor because the objective is to outline the wider national and international events which have impacted on Indochina. Limited primary sources is more of a problem for a detailed understanding of local events that occurred in the development of OBM. Those events and the historical sources available for them are discussed in Chapter 6.

## **2-2 Comment on sources**

Most of the modern histories written about Vietnam in the twentieth century focus on the events in the north and the south of the country, the great population and agricultural centres of the Red River and Mekong Deltas, and the two major cities of Hanoi and Saigon (Hall, 1970; Hammer, 1954; Jennings, 2001; Marr, 1981; Vien, 1993). This is particularly the case for histories written in English. It was in the population and industrial centres of the northern and southern deltas that the major political events occurred that were part of the political and military struggle for control of the country. Central Vietnam occupies a secondary place in these accounts,

although it had been the national capital before the French occupation in 1873 and remained the royal seat of power until 1945. This lack of historical focus is unfortunate because Central Vietnam has always had a character and history distinctive from the north and the south (Li Tana, 1998) and was always at the forefront of resistance to colonial occupation (Marr, 1971).

The problem of historical sources is exacerbated further because Hué suffered more than many other cities during both the First and Second Indochina Wars. First, with the return of the French in 1946-47, when as Thompson and Adloff (1947:415) note:

In Hué, also, a large proportion of the structures of the imperial palace and much of the town were destroyed a few months ago when the French retook the town.

Two decades later history repeated itself when the city was occupied by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) during the 1968 Tết offensive. Hué was occupied and fought over longer than any other South Vietnamese city, so that, by 26 February 1968, when the US military finally secured the city after four weeks of bitter fighting, ‘beautiful Hué lay in ruins’ (Hammel, 1991:354).

In a reply to a 2002 request from BMNP for access to archival documents relating to OBM, the *Centre des Archives d’Outre-Mer* at Aix-en-Provence advised that the major part of the archives of the *Residence-supérieure en Annam* was conserved at the Vietnam National Centre for Archives in Hồ Chí Minh City. This archive, recently relocated to Đà Lạt, advised BMNP in early 2008 that the only French documents from Hué they held dated from the period 1945-1954 (Lê Quý Minh, pers. comm. 17 Jan. 2008). It appears that most of the historical records dating from the 1930s and early 1940s, and particularly those related to local urban planning and management issues, have been lost as a consequence of the conflicts in Hué in 1947 and 1968. This is another reason why archaeological evidence is likely to be of particular value in a study of Central Vietnam of the 1930s and early 1940s.

The historical sources relevant to this study fall into a number of categories: published and unpublished documents in English, French and Vietnamese languages. There are several published sources. Much of the English literature dealing with the French colonial era was written well after that time, with the notable exception of Ennis’s

(1936) *French Policy and Development in Indochina* and the translation of Robequain's *The Economic Development of French Indo-China* (1944). Ennis provided a valuable review of French economic and social policy at a crucial time, following the full impact of the Great Depression and just as OBM was in its early phase of establishment. As well as giving a review of the economic, social and political environment in Indochina, Ennis also provided some interesting comparisons with the English and Dutch colonies at the time. Robequain's work was first published in French in 1939, but republished in English in 1944 with a supplement covering the period 1939 to 1943 (Andrus & Greene, 1944). An English translation of a popular French travel book, *On the Mandarin Road* (Dorgelès, 1926) written in the mid-1920s is valuable for providing a critical French perspective of French colonialism in Indochina, as well as an European perspective of the Vietnamese people and culture in the early twentieth century.

WWII brought Vietnam into the Western political consciousness for the first time. Southern Vietnam was at the forefront of the Japanese war strategy during the Pacific War 1941-1945, initially as the military headquarters during the 1941 invasion of Malaya, the Philippines and Singapore, and continuing as a crucial supply base to the Japanese Southern Army. The First Indochina War against the French was a struggle for independence from colonial repression that typified wars of independence in a growing number of Asian and African countries in the 1950s and 1960s. But by 1950, to the great cost of her people, Vietnam had assumed a symbolic significance to the world's major powers as the key that would decide the future of communism in Southeast Asia. The First Indochina War developed into the Second Indochina War that was one of the main military confrontations of the Cold War between communism and capitalism that defined global politics in the post WWII period. It was the Second Indochina War, in particular, that resulted in a large body of literature in English on Vietnamese history, both ancient and modern. This literature was intended to provide a background to the war in a country that had attracted little interest outside France before WWII, and an understanding of a people so reluctant to submit to the wishes of the great powers.

The Second Indochina War grew out of the French struggle to maintain its colonial possessions in Indochina following WWII. The influence of the French colonial era

has been analysed by many writers in the USA, and elsewhere, to understand the roots of the conflict with the US. Three books by David G. Marr (1971; 1981; 1995), now an Emeritus Professor at the Australian National University, but who served in the US Marine Corps as an intelligence officer in the early 1960s, are particularly relevant. Marr is fluent in Vietnamese and his three books, and journal articles (Marr, 1980; 2003) have been based on detailed study of original documents (archived government sources, newspapers, pamphlets) and provide a valuable perspective of the development of a Vietnamese nationalist spirit during the early twentieth century. They document the growth of an independence movement culminating in the declaration of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Hanoi in 1945. There are other valuable secondary sources which contribute to an understanding of French colonial economic and social policy, and the rise of the independence movement (Duiker, 1981; Hammer, 1954; Thompson, 1942). Duiker, for example, focused on the development of the Vietnamese Communist Party, while Hammer and Thompson contribute a perspective of the period that focused on European and US interests in particular. Recent academic interest in colonialism has contributed a growing number of studies of many aspects of French colonial Vietnam, such as colonial literature (Britto, 2004; Norindr, 1996; Thompson, 1942), urbanism and architecture (Wright, 1991), youth movements (Raffin, 2005), as well as politics (Jennings, 2001).

In recent years a number of English translations have become available through the Vietnamese government's publishing arm, Thế Giới Publishers, including works by famous Vietnamese of the time such as Hồ Chí Minh (Hồ Chí Minh, 2002) and Võ Nguyên Giáp (Giáp, 2004). They have also published an official history entitled *Vietnam: A Long History* (Vien, 1993). English translations of key French books have also become available, such as Huard and Durand's (1998) *Vietnam: Civilization and Culture* and Triaire's (2000) *Indochina through Texts*, which provide a French perspective of aspects of traditional Vietnamese culture. Unfortunately, these texts also reflect the common focus on the north and south with only limited examination of Central Vietnam. There are some recent histories published in Huế in Vietnamese (Đỗ, 2000; Đỗ, Ngô, & Nguyễn, 2005), but these official histories are symptomatic of most recent Vietnamese studies, in which:

... ideology pervades all publications as the history of the party blends with national history. More than ever, historiography is constrained to lay emphasis on the



attainments of the tradition of resistance as well as on the intrinsic military qualities of the peasants and workers, the main force of the revolution (Anh, 1995:131).

As a consequence people who were opposed to communism are often excluded from the Vietnamese publications. As well, the Communist Party's role in some events may be over emphasised.

### **2-3 French colonisation of Central Vietnam**

Central Vietnam has had a long history of trade and relations with foreign interests. Islamic traders moving into Southeast Asia and China had been trading in the port of Hội An, just outside Đà Nẵng, during Cham rule, since about the eighth century (Anon., 2000:26). The first sustained contact the Vietnamese had with Europeans was with the Portuguese who established regular trading links with both Central Vietnam and with Tonkin before the end of the sixteenth century. They traded raw silk into the Japanese market (Hall, 1970:418), some of which came through Hội An. Jesuit missionaries worked for 200 years in Vietnam during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, often in secret and sometimes posing as traders to gain access to the country, risking bitter persecution especially by the Trịnh in the north, but also from the Nguyễn princes in the centre around Huế (Hall, 1970:417). In the late seventeenth century there was severe repression of Christians by the Nguyễn lords because of their lack of support in the war of 1655-61 against the Trịnh of the north, (Hall, 1970:417). Many Vietnamese Christians were massacred, churches burnt and missionaries imprisoned. In 1738, following a dispute over the future of the church in Asia, Pope Clement XII granted the northern Tonkin region to the Jesuits and the French *Société des Missions Etrangères* were assigned the area from Huế south (Hall, 1970:418). Christian missionaries were never very popular with the ruling elite and in 1750 all but a few missionaries were deported by the Nguyễns. Despite their mistrust of Christianity there was a constant presence of missionaries in the Huế court of the Nguyễn lords through the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, where they were sought for their scientific and mathematical skills (Li Tana, 1998:72). It is the celebrated missionary Alexandre de Rhodes who is credited with developing the Romanised Vietnamese script (quốc ngữ) in the mid-seventeenth century (Marr, 1981:145n).

European influence was not restricted to religion. By the mid-seventeenth century European technology had already made a significant impact on the capability of the Nguyễn military through their adoption of Portuguese cannon casting techniques (Li Tana, 1998:45). During the eighteenth century there was constant fighting in Vietnam between the Nguyễn lords of Central Vietnam, the Tây Sơn of the north, and the Khmer who until that time occupied the Mekong delta regions, albeit in a fairly undeveloped condition. It was with the assistance of a French missionary that one of the Nguyễn lords, Nguyễn Anh, was smuggled to safety after one of the battles fought over Saigon. Nguyễn Anh then went on to defeat the Tây Sơn and consolidate the country, more or less as Vietnam is geographically defined today. Crucial to his success was the support of French naval officers and some French military forces. In 1802 Nguyễn Anh chose the royal name of Gia Long and established the Nguyễn dynasty with Huế as the imperial capital (Hall, 1970:431).

The new régime adopted traditional Confucianist principles of government. Huế developed a reputation as a politically conservative centre dominated by the mandarin class that served the royal household and managed the Vietnamese administrative structure (Marr, 1971:408). Uyen Nicole Duong (2005:25), however, also described Huế as a city of ‘lovers and poets’ and still at the beginning of the twenty-first century it retains this cultural focus through its World Heritage status and its biannual festival of arts.

The French interest in Vietnam was largely strategic. It was partly European competition for the Chinese market that led to the eventual French colonisation of Vietnam (Hall, 1970:648). The French saw the two great rivers, the Mekong in the south and the Red River in the north, as potential access routes into the western parts of China. Occupation of Vietnam also allowed the French potential control of Britain’s trade route with China (Aldrich, 1996). Colonisation was progressive during the second half of the nineteenth century. Initially, several provinces in the south around Saigon were occupied in 1861 following persecution of missionaries and a trade dispute with Huế (Hall, 1970:648). The French then moved into Cambodia in 1863, establishing a protectorate and retaining the monarchy (Hall, 1970:651). Exploration of the Mekong proved that it was not suitable for trade into China, so the French turned to the Red River. Resistance to the French presence in Tonkin resulted

in the French military seizure of the north in 1882 and Hué the following year (Hall, 1970:660). The four countries or *pays*, Cochinchina, Cambodia, Tonkin and Annam, were brought together into the *Union Indochinoise Francaise* in 1887 (Hall, 1970:664). Laos was incorporated into the Union in 1893 (Robequain, 1944:5).

A number of different formal relationships tied the countries of the Union to the French, but by the beginning of the twentieth century they were all effectively under the control of a French Governor-General based in Hanoi. Cochinchina had been annexed as a full colony in 1862, however, the other four *pays* signed treaties, under duress, as protectorates of France, giving at least a suggestion of indirect rule (Ennis, 1936:52). Annam, Cambodia and Laos retained their royal families while Tonkin remained nominally subject to the Nguyễn dynasty in Hué. Cochinchina developed as a subject colony from the beginning with a French administration. The administration in the other *pays* developed two distinct but parallel administrative arms. The original administration was retained under the control of mandarins who answered to the monarch. But all decisions were subject to French oversight and approval by a parallel French administrative framework. Each *pays* had a French '*Résident supérieure*' in charge of the local administration, but who answered to the Governor-General in Hanoi.

The maintenance by the French of the monarchy resulted in Hué retaining many of its traditional rites much longer than the other *pays* (Hammer, 1954:12). The city and court were relatively small and the mandarin scholar gentry remained closely tied to the land and the peasantry far more than in other places (Marr, 1971:53). In the latter part of the nineteenth century it was among the mandarin class and the royal family that resistance to colonisation was most prominent (Marr, 1971:44). During the early years of the twentieth century the mandarin class became obviously impotent against the French, and it was then that the peasantry became increasingly vocal against a new taxation and corvée system (Marr, 1971:207). The French aimed to transform the country from a feudal, insular, agrarian society to an export/import economy favouring large landholdings by fewer people and an increasing focus on a landless labour force (Marr, 1981:25). It was in the interests of the French to increase the general standard of living so that more people could afford French manufactured imports. Industrialisation of Indochina was limited because that would have threatened French imports. There was a growing *petit bourgeoisie* of Vietnamese

small business people (Norlund, 2000:217). The transformation of the economy by 1925 and increasing access to French education and the ideals of the Third Republic, such as liberty, equality and fraternity, meant the bourgeoisie was at the forefront of political activism (Marr, 1971:263).

#### **2-4 Early 20th century in Central Vietnam**

The beginning of the twentieth century in Indochina was marked by relative stability as the country increasingly came under French control. Governor-General Paul Doumer (1897-1902) reorganised the administration, including the abolition of the Viceroy of Tonkin, a position that had provided representation of the imperial government of Huế in Hanoi, thereby further marginalising the imperial influence (Hall, 1970:758). It was Doumer who also authorised the establishment of climatic resorts at Đà Lạt and Bana before the end of the nineteenth century (Gaide, 1931; Jennings, 2006). His successor Paul Beau (1902-1907) built on the reforms of Doumer, introduced a consultative chamber, and established training for indigenous officials. Albert Sarraut, who served as Governor-General of Indochina for two terms (1911-1914 & 1917-19) and later became the Minister for Colonies in France (1921-1925), introduced the policy of 'association' to Vietnam that allowed for greater involvement of indigenous officials in government, albeit under the strict control of the French (Hall, 1970:758-60). Nevertheless, despite this progress the administration made little substantial change in the character of French colonial policy. There were still occasional outbreaks of rebellion against the French which were severely repressed rather than implementing any notable reform (Frederick, 1973:96-7). In 1908, for example, a plot to poison the French garrison in Huế was unearthed (Ennis, 1936:178). As well, there was an uprising in Central Vietnam against French taxation in the same year. Starting in Quảng Nam Province and spreading to Quảng Ngãi, Bình Định and Phú Yên Provinces, and north to Thừa Thiên, it culminated in large demonstrations outside the governor's office in Huế. The French responded by firing upon the demonstrators, thousands were arrested and several of the leaders imprisoned on Poulo Condor, a prison island off the southern coast of Cochinchina (Vien, 1993:174).

During the first decades of the twentieth century, several major events outside the country encouraged nationalist groups within Indochina to continue working towards

independence, or at least reform. Japan had remained free of colonial domination and had embarked independently on a path of modernisation. The Japanese military and naval defeat of Russia in 1904-5 showed that the great European nations were not invulnerable to Asian powers. In the years following this victory many Vietnamese students went to Japan to study. Similarly, the fall of the Chinese imperial government in 1911 gave new hope to Vietnamese nationalists, as did the Ghandi movement in India (Ennis, 1936:177). World War I in particular was a major blow to the prestige of the French. Indochina supplied as many as one hundred thousand people including troops and workers to support the *metropole* in its struggle for survival, but the nature of the war, and following the war the treatment of people in the Middle East, highlighted the ‘civilisation’ of Europeans in a new ‘brutal’ light (Ennis, 1936:182). The experience of those who had served in the colonial army in WWI in Europe gave them an understanding of the stark contrast between the French republican philosophy of ‘liberty, equality, fraternity’ as it was expressed in the *metropole* and how French republicanism was expressed in Indochina. Many became attracted to the ideals of the political left. Furthermore, in January 1918, President Woodrow Wilson’s fourteen points for the settlement of Europe supported the principle of national independence for all people (Lowe, 1982:20).

Following WWI many of the promises of reform made by Governor-General Sarraut, such as increasing collaboration between colonists and indigenes and even eventual self rule for Indochina in recognition of their support during WWI, were ignored (Marr, 1981:6). Emperor Khải Định went to Paris in 1922 to seek a shift in the administration of Annam and Tonkin from coercion to cooperation (Hall, 1970:763). He was followed in 1923, again unsuccessfully, by Bùi Quang Chiêu, leader of the new Constitutionalist Party, one of a number of nationalist parties with varying emphases on collaboration with the French (Marr, 1981:294). Most of these groups respected French culture, but sought closer cooperation and more equitable treatment.

The 1920s were a time of relative prosperity as the Vietnamese economy became increasingly integrated into the global economy, with growing exports in rice, rubber and minerals. Most of the agricultural development occurred in the Mekong Delta in the south where the French were instrumental in developing large scale hydrological projects from the mid-nineteenth century that resulted by 1930 in more than 1300

kilometres of canals and 1.4 million hectares of new agricultural land to support the growing export rice industry (Ennis, 1936:126; Robequain, 1944:111). Rice contributed two-thirds of Indochinese exports in the 1920s, most of it going to China and Hong Kong (Aldrich, 1996:189). In the north, industrial development focused around the major port of Haiphong, which was relatively close to the coal fields of Hòn Gay in northeast Tonkin. The main industries were cement manufacture and construction materials, products that did not compete with French imports. In the early years of the twentieth century some zinc and tin deposits were also developed in northern Tonkin. This northern *pays* remained the major contributor to mineral exports. Not until the later 1920s did mineral exploration seriously expand into Annam, Laos and Cambodia. By 1930 the ‘rush’ was already subsiding as a consequence of the depression and did not recover significantly before the beginning of WWII (Robequain, 1944:251). This was partly as a result of a French tariff introduced in 1928 to further integrate Indochina’s economy with the *metropole* at the expense of trade with her Asian neighbours (Norlund, 2000:214-5).

Some development of hydraulic infrastructure occurred on the plain south of Huế, but the geography of Central Vietnam, characterised by a narrow coastal plain with small, widely dispersed deltas and generally poor soils, limited the agricultural potential of the Protectorate of Annam. Industrialisation was also very limited in Annam although the indigenous population was equivalent in size to Tonkin and Cochinchina (Robequain, 1944:21 Table 1). Annam’s people were spread along a thousand kilometres of coast in many small and poorly connected centres. Furthermore, Annam had the smallest number *per capita* of Chinese residents of any of the Indochina *pays*, and it was the Chinese, particularly in Cochinchina, that were at the heart of much of the agricultural and financial development during the period of French occupation (Robequain, 1944:34-6, Table 6). There was some mining and tea plantations in Quảng Nam, near Tourane, as well as some sugar and coconut plantations further south, but the French preferred to develop these traditional crops in Cochinchina (Robequain, 1944:234). The coffee and rubber plantations of Annam were also located in the south exploiting the red soils of the Central Tablelands (Robequain, 1944:187).

Hardy (1998:808) noted that between 1924 and 1930 French investment in Indochina was almost six times greater than in the twenty-year period leading up to the end of WWI and that the number of companies operating in Indochina trebled in the 1920s. Despite this level of investment the Vietnamese were increasingly dissatisfied at the harsh treatment they continued to suffer at the hands of the French, so that during 1926 there was a ‘clamour for independence’ (Ennis, 1936:184) reflected in a growing number of popular nationalist movements. The socialist Governor-General Alexandre Varenne (1925-27) was withdrawn because he was seen as too lenient with the indigenous opposition. In January 1929 the Vietnam National Party, the Việt Nam Quốc Dân Đảng (VNQDD), made an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Governor-General Pierre Pasquier (1927-34), and then in February killed a French labour bureau officer (Hall, 1970:764). At this time the developing international financial crisis was already starting to affect prices of export commodities and a new French tariff introduced in 1928 exacerbated further the financial problems for the Vietnamese.

## **2-5 The 1930s**

The pinnacle of the French Colonial Empire coincided with the Colonial Exhibition in Paris in 1931. The opening of the new decade was also significant because the global financial crisis that originated in the US with the 1929 stockmarket crash was starting to impact on France and Indochina. At the same time there was a fresh organisation of anti-colonial forces that increasingly highlighted the fragility of the French position in Indochina. Revolutionary insurrections broke out first at Yen Bay in the north and then spread south through Annam to Saigon.

### **2-5-1 The years of blood and terror: 1930 and 1931**

In February 1930 the VNQDD inspired two companies of Tonkinese soldiers to revolt at Yen Bay in the northwest of the Red River Delta. They killed six French officers and seized the garrison arms store (Ennis, 1936:187; Vien, 1993:196). Eight days later a bicycle militia bombed part of the business centre in Hanoi (Ennis, 1936:187). French troops responded by ‘ranging through the countryside, bombing, shooting and arresting’ (Hammer, 1954:83). The French security organisation, the Sûreté, had infiltrated the VNQDD and were able to arrest most of the VNQDD’s leadership within a few days (Duiker, 1981:14). Demonstrations followed in Cochinchina where rubber plantation workers protested their terrible working conditions (Duiker,

1981:35). The recently established Indochina Communist Party (ICP) became increasingly active in the industrial town of Vinh, the capital of Nghệ An Province in northern Annam, as well as in the countryside of Nghệ An and neighbouring Hà Tĩnh Province, planning mass unrest for May Day 1930.

Popular discontent was a consequence of numerous factors exacerbated by floods in northern Annam in early 1930, followed by a drought and hunger. Working conditions in the mines in Tonkin and the plantations in Cochinchina were atrocious, as they were in the factories of Vinh and Haiphong. Working hours were virtually unlimited, workers were kept under constant surveillance and subject to corporal punishment, were ill-fed and exposed to malaria (Vien, 1993:186). Conditions improved only marginally under new labour laws introduced in the late 1920s and early 1930s. These improved sanitary and safety conditions, banned child-labour and forced-labour, and resulted in mortality among workers falling from 5.4 per cent in 1927 to 2.3 per cent in 1930 (Ennis, 1936:161). In the countryside the peasants were subjected to high taxes and rents which were not relaxed, despite falling prices for rice as a consequence of the developing depression and the effects of the French tariff system introduced in 1928 (Norlund, 2000:215). The peasantry suffered the loss of communal land confiscated by wealthy landlords and were subject, particularly in Central Vietnam, to venal mandarins (Duiker, 1981:33).

The Sûreté was able to crack down and prevent a coordinated insurrection on May Day 1930. However, continuing unrest in the factories of Vinh and the nearby countryside led to mass demonstrations demanding a moratorium on taxes and the return of communal land. The failure of the French to respond led to an escalation in the riots, government buildings were attacked and burnt and tax rolls destroyed. In the face of a complete breakdown in colonial authority ICP organisers helped set up local management committees they called Soviets, run by committees elected by village members, to take over the responsibility of government in the villages (Duiker, 1981:37). By September, the two provinces of Nghệ An and Hà Tĩnh in northern Annam were in open revolt, but by that time the tax riots in Cochinchina had subsided and the Red River Delta was still quiet, so it was clear that what became known as the Nghệ Tĩnh Soviets was unlikely to spread throughout the country in open insurrection as the ICP had hoped.



The French military presence had been limited to a garrison of colonial troops in Vinh, so when the French responded they sent in a Foreign Legion battalion to suppress the peasants, with orders to kill nine out of ten prisoners taken (Marr, 1981:385). At one stage in September, French warplanes strafed a column of demonstrators marching towards Vinh. Peace was restored by early 1931, but in the suppression of the revolt as many as three thousand inhabitants of Nghệ An and Hà Tĩnh were killed and, according to the ICP, as many as 50,000 militants arrested (Duiker, 1981:41; Marr, 1981:385). Many of the ICP cadres who had gained much organisational experience in the process were arrested, eighty were executed and four hundred given long prison terms (Duiker, 1981:41). The year 1930 became known as the Year of Blood (Hammer, 1954:87).

The colonial administration was deeply shocked by the events at Nghệ Tĩnh. It removed a sense of complacency that had developed in the French community over the relatively peaceful decades preceding 1930 (Jennings, 2001:135). It had been the first major challenge to French authority since the beginning of the century, and it was the first time since the tax riots of 1908 in Huế that peasants and workers had joined in revolt against colonial conditions (Duiker, 1981:33). Osborne (1976:15) suggested that it confirmed a long-held French anxiety about the threat from the Vietnamese, and that fear explains the level of the French suppression of dissent in 1931 that became known as the Year of Terror and continued in a period of systematic colonial repression until 1934 (Marr, 1981:221).

### **2-5-2 The Great Depression**

The collapse in prices for internationally traded commodities and raw materials, like rice, rubber, coffee and coal that resulted from the 1929-1930 global economic crisis, had a significant impact on colonial communities that supplied the rapidly industrialising, imperial Western powers. The economic crisis had almost as severe an impact in Indochina as in the Dutch East Indies where international trade had decreased as much as fifty per cent, even though Indochina was not as integrated into the global economy (Ennis, 1936:138). Within the Indochinese economy, the most severely affected were the large landholders, tenants and merchants in Cochinchina which contributed sixty to sixty-five per cent of Indochina's rice exports (Norlund, 2000). Amongst the most severely affected were Chinese traders, who generally had

a weak financial base but had been fundamental to the growth of the rice export industry. In Haiphong, the main trade port in the north, for example, half the Chinese population left to return to China. As a consequence of the depression French capitalists strengthened their hold on the Indochinese economy (Brocheux, 2000:256).

The price of rice began to fall in 1929 before the international economic crisis had a significant effect on the economy of France or Indochina, as a consequence of a new tariff introduced by the French to integrate the Indochinese economy more thoroughly with the *metropole*. The tariff had a severe impact on Indochinese trade with its main Asian trading partners (Norlund, 2000:214). Prices fell between 1929 and 1931 by about fifty per cent and continued to fall until 1934, only beginning to recover in 1935 (Norlund, 2000:205, Table 10.3). The impact of this was exacerbated because land rents and wages were often paid in rice, so that falling prices impacted the whole economy (Brocheux, 2000:252). As business and industry closed or slowed, thousands of migrant workers were forced to return to their villages in the north and central coast regions of Vietnam.

Almost ninety-five per cent of the population in Tonkin and Annam still lived a rural agricultural life in 1930, living more of a subsistence lifestyle with limited exposure to the cash economy (Marr, 1981:24). The collapse in the price of rice and a general reduction in prices had some benefits for their standard of living (Norlund, 2000:203). However, this was offset by the collapse of two successive rice harvests in Tonkin and northern Annam (Hall, 1970:765). Furthermore, many people from the north and central regions who had gone to work in the south and the industrial centre around Haiphong in the north, were now forced to return home as increasing numbers of businesses failed because of the economic crisis. Many had a growing problem paying taxes until the French finally reduced the tax burden in 1933-34 (Brocheux, 2000:257).

The French occupation of Indochina was supposed to be self supporting and was funded mainly by a poll tax and taxes on monopolies in opium, salt and alcohol (Brocheux, 2000:257). These taxes had long been the subject of Vietnamese objection which regularly erupted into open revolt, most seriously in 1908 and 1916. In northern Annam, the 1930 Nghệ Tĩnh soviets, was not so much a revolt against

falling prices as a consequence of the depression, but against the continuing demands for payment of taxes. During this revolt farmers refused to pay these taxes, with the result that the domestic budget of Annam was more seriously impacted by the global economic crisis than the other Indochinese *pays*, despite its relative lack of development and exposure to the export economy (Norlund, 2000:209).

Before 1930 many people in Central Vietnam contributed to their limited income through the collection and sale of forest products like cinnamon bark, cottage crafts like silk production and fish drying, and small scale production of sugar, maize and tobacco. The main plantation cash-crops within the vicinity of Huế were two tea plantations in Quảng Nam Province. After 1930, exports of all these commodities out of the port of Tourane virtually collapsed, and some never recovered. The production of sugar in Quảng Ngãi Province, for example, fell from twenty thousand tons in 1929 to four thousand tons in 1937 (Brocheux, 2000:257).

During the economic crisis the government came under attack for its management of the economy from landlords and planters reflecting views from the French extreme right (Brocheux, 2000:265). The big landowners were only saved from bankruptcy by long-term loans totalling ten million piastres, however, more than ninety-nine per cent of this money went to less than four hundred landowners, and the small Vietnamese entrepreneurial class trying to establish an industrial sector was ignored. The consequence was that the French establishment lost further prestige and credibility among the Vietnamese of all classes (Brocheux, 2000:265).

The economy began to recover by 1934 (Brocheux, 2000:264) but during the depression one third of the workforce became unemployed, one in seven administration staff were laid off and wages fell by twenty-five per cent (Vien, 1993:197). Public expenditure fell by forty-two per cent (Brocheux, 2000:261). By 1935 the money in circulation was reduced by thirty-five per cent (Vien, 1993:205). Political unrest broke out throughout the country and by 1932 there were ten thousand political prisoners in Vietnamese prisons (Vien, 1993:209).

### **2-5-3 1936-39**

In June 1936, the socialist Popular Front government was elected in France. An early impact throughout the colonies was the granting of amnesty for political prisoners, so that in Indochina as many as 1500 prisoners were released, including many of the communists arrested during the ‘systematic repression’ of the early 1930s (Jennings, 2001:135; Marr, 1981:221). The Popular Front government reversed many repressive policies in order to generate a relatively open political debate (Jennings, 2001:135). Working hours were reduced to eight hours and one days rest per week introduced, however, through 1936, 1937 and 1938 worker unrest continued to grow (Vien, 1993:213-4). Many of the *petit blancs*, those lower level, ‘left-leaning’ French colonists who had lost their employment in the cuts introduced during the depression participated in demonstrations during 1936 and 1937 (Brocheux, 2000:267). Municipal elections in Saigon in 1937 resulted in two communist and one Trotskyist representative being elected. In April 1939, an election of colonial councillors in Cochinchina saw as many as eighty per cent of votes cast for Trotskyist representatives (Tân, 1964:445).

The Popular Front government in France was an unstable coalition of left parties that ultimately represented a period of lost opportunities and little real change. Its early colonial reforms were resisted by the mainly conservative French in the colonies, and many policies were withdrawn by later iterations of the coalition after the collapse of Leon Blum’s 1936-7 first Popular Front government (Jennings, 2001:135-6). The French government reverted to the conservatives with the final collapse of the Popular Front in 1938 as the fascist threat in Europe increasingly headed towards war. Thomas (2005:313) noted that during 1938-39, French political parties across the spectrum expressed nostalgia for French imperial grandeur, recognising the enormous contribution of France’s colonies to the war effort in 1914-18.

### **2-5-4 French and Vietnamese attitudes and responses in the 1930s**

The implementation and maintenance of colonial domination depends on the expression of power and civilisation (Cooper, 2001:145) and a moral belief in the superiority of one people over another. It also requires an ongoing colonial presence in the colonised country. In the case of European colonisation of an Asian country that had a civilisation four thousand years old, it required a creative comparison that

revolved around theories of cultural evolution and social Darwinism. The relationship between the Vietnamese and the French was based on myths that grew out of the nineteenth century development of social Darwinism. The whole concept of colonialism was based on a concept of European cultural and economic superiority (Cooke, 1991:364). Maintenance of the colonial position of the French demanded an ongoing validation of their own superiority and the inferiority of their indigenous colonial subjects based on the laws of linear cultural evolution and biological determinism of the nineteenth century. This idea placed European civilisation at the top of a ladder of cultural superiority (and French culture at the top of that), above China and India which was weighed down by ‘the deadweight of millennial tradition’ (Cooke, 1991:369). Below were people of various barbarous cultures and ‘primitive savages’ were at the bottom.

The publication of a book, *La Cite Antique*, (1864) by Fustel de Coulanges in Europe, presented a reconstruction of life in ancient Rome and Greece that provided an inspirational perception for French colonialists of the place of Vietnamese culture in this cultural evolutionary hierarchy. They saw the families of ancient Rome mirrored in the Vietnamese, and this gave them confidence in applying French laws in an otherwise quite alien world by suggesting that all societies developed according to the same principles. This myth of cultural superiority had become conventional colonial wisdom by the early twentieth century (Cooke, 1991:372-5). Not only did the myth give the colonists justification for their rule, but it suggested that the Vietnamese and the French had a special relationship, that the Vietnamese were the ‘French of Asia’, and that they were superior to their Asian neighbours to the extent that only the Japanese equalled or resembled the Vietnamese. From the French administration’s perspective, the problem for autonomous Vietnamese development was that the rebellious Vietnamese elite had become irrelevant through their ties with Chinese Confucianism (Cooke, 1991:382).

Many French expatriates were never comfortable with the Vietnamese and had never really trusted them. Osborne (1976) noted a wavering of French confidence in their own superiority, at least by the 1930s. He argued that by the early 1930s there had been a ‘very decided shift in attitudes’ from the early colonial period to ‘a feeling of anxiety both in personal terms and in relation to the whole issue of France’s colonial

presence in Indochina' (Osborne, 1976:4). It was this anxiety that fuelled the increasingly harsh repression of Vietnamese political activity, especially after Yen Bay and the subsequent uprising in the Nghê Tinh Soviets. In the early years of the twentieth century, although the colonists may not have been prepared to admit a threat to their sovereignty from within, the Japanese defeat of Russia in 1905 and their emergence as a major power was recognised as a potential external threat to French rule in Indochina. For those who recognised in the Vietnamese certain cultural traits in common with the Japanese, the implication of a threat from within was becoming 'all too possible' (Osborne, 1976:14).

Some of the French who came to Indochina, with a desire of building a country in the image of French culture, discovered a people who were proud of their history, particularly their struggle against China from whom they had maintained their independence for almost a thousand years. They found a people ever ready to fight against colonial domination (Osborne, 1976:12). Among the French in the early years of the twentieth century, there was a growing recognition that the Vietnamese would never be changed into an 'Asian approximation of a French citizen' (Osborne, 1976:14). These were a people with their own civilisation far older than Europe, and most Vietnamese people felt that their own culture was far superior to anything the French might introduce (Osborne, 1976:8-9). By the late 1920s and 1930s the French perception of their position was one of uncertainty often developing into anxiety (Osborne, 1976:16). Even among senior members of the colonial administration, there was a realisation that an end to French colonial domination in Indochina would come sooner rather than later (Osborne, 1976:22). There was a growing divide between indigenous and colonial communities, and a constant concern about what the 'real' intentions were of the Vietnamese population. This nagging anxiety was made all the worse because so few French colonisers could communicate with the Vietnamese in their own language (Osborne, 1976:16). In a letter to the Minister of Colonies in Paris, the secretary to the Resident Superior in Annam, Georges Grandjean, wrote in 1931:

We no longer have anyone on our side. The mandarins, to whom we never offered sufficient moral or material benefits, serve us only prudently, and cannot do much anyway. The bourgeoisie probably does not desire communism, but it considers that it might well be, as in China, an excellent recipe for external use ... Youth is entirely

opposed to us: much like the immense masses of miserable peasants and workers. Truthfully, what is needed here is much more than repression (quoted in Tai, 1992:248).

This pervasive anxiety that was developing among the French often extended to fear that they would be murdered in their beds as had happened to the French officers in Yen Bay. Even in the colonial retreat at Đà Lạt, rumours of communist cells active among the domestic workers cast uncertainty on the security of the French in an environment where the indigenous population were under greatest control (Jennings, 2003:178). This attitude also helps explain the frenetic quality of social life among the French in Indochina in the 1930s (Osborne, 1976:17).

The early 1930s had seen a new element in the resistance to colonial occupation now coming from the peasants and proletariat, urged on by the ICP. There was little cross-cultural social interaction, even between the French and the Vietnamese elite. By the middle of the decade the economy began to recover, but even with the improvements in working conditions and the easing of political repression under the French Popular Front government, the number of strikes and demonstrations continued to grow in the second half of the decade. At the same time the external threat to Indochina from Japan was growing as the Japanese began expressing their colonial ambitions in northeast Asia.

From the early 1930s Japan showed an increasingly militant approach to the maintenance and expansion of its economic interests in northeast Asia, firstly in Manchuria in 1931, and extending into China as the 1930s progressed. China at the time was suffering from a civil war between the nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) and Chinese communist forces. In 1936, the communists and KMT deferred their conflict to form an alliance against the Japanese, and in mid-1937 the Japanese escalated the conflict to unlimited war (Hook, 1973:193).

Following the outbreak of war in China the Japanese quickly defeated the KMT armies in eastern China and Chiang Kai-shek's government moved to Chongqing in central China. Japanese hostility towards Indochina dates from 1937 following the Japanese blockade of Chinese ports. The Haiphong – Yunnan and the Hanoi - Lang Son railways now became the principal means for war supplies to the Chinese

Nationalist Army. Freight on these railways, although irregular and with many disruptions, increased during 1937 and 1938. The growing Japanese demands that the French limit the supply of materials to China coincided with a developing political crisis in Europe, and the French agreed to stop all traffic on the railways in December 1938 (Andrus & Greene, 1944:353). However, the Japanese continued to move into southern China and occupied Hainan Island in February 1939. This effectively threatened the port at Haiphong in Tonkin and the French reopened the railway in protest in March 1939. In the following month the Japanese occupied the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea between Vietnam and the Philippines, and bombed the Haiphong – Yunnan Railway at Mengtze in southwest China (Andrus & Greene, 1944:354).

The full scale invasion of China by the Japanese in mid-1937, led the ICP to call on the Popular Front government to institute a realistic defence strategy for Indochina (Marr, 1980:108). The Massacre of Nanking in November 1937 convinced those Vietnamese who still supported Japan that she was more of a threat than a liberator despite her new proposal for a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere intended to integrate Asia's economies and overthrow European dominance in favour of 'Asia for the Asians' (Elsbree, 1953:23). By 1938 the growing threat of war in Europe as well as in the East, generated calls among the French for the upgrade of defences and even to manufacture munitions in Indochina (Andrus & Greene, 1944:354). In mid-1939 there were still fifty thousand colonial troops in Indochina, but they were poorly equipped. Even by May 1940, when Germany invaded France, Indochina defence preparation extended to little more than general statements about the development of airstrips, roads and ports. However, the country did experience a period of economic boom leading up to the outbreak of war in Europe (Andrus & Greene, 1944:355). At about this time, in September 1939, there was a reasonable degree of Vietnamese support for the allied efforts to stop both the German and Japanese military advances, such that forty thousand Vietnamese soldiers were sent to France without incident (Marr, 1980:117).

In September 1939, Georges Catroux took up his position as Governor-General of Indochina on the day that Germany invaded Poland and in response, France and Britain declared war on Germany. The Paris government outlawed the Communist



Party (Duiker, 1981:59). Catroux immediately ordered a general mobilisation and initiated a crackdown on communists in Saigon, imprisoning almost all the Trotskyists who had won convincingly against the bourgeois Constitutionalist Party and the ICP in Colonial Council election of April 1939 (Marr, 1981:394). Preparation for war occupied the next few months with the continuing development of airstrips and ports (Andrus & Greene, 1944:354).

## **2-6 The 1940s**

### **2-6-1 World War II and the Japanese occupation of Indochina**

In May 1940, Germany invaded France. The Japanese used the opportunity to again demand the closure of the Yunnan rail line. Catroux deferred inevitable compliance as long as possible, but with no assistance from the US or the British forthcoming to oppose the Japanese, the poorly equipped colonial defence force was unable to resist the demands. Following the capitulation of the Paris government on 22 June 1940 it was replaced by the collaborationist government of Marshall Philippe Pétain based at the spa city of Vichy, that removed France from further participation in the war. Catroux was withdrawn and Rear Admiral Jean Decoux was named the new Governor-General of Indochina on 30 June. This was only a few days after the French fleet based in Algeria refused to join the allied force and was sunk by the British navy at Mers-el-Kébir in Algeria with the loss of 1300 French sailors. Decoux began his tenure with a strong dislike for the British and strong support for the Vichy government, and although not happy with a Japanese occupation he negotiated a treaty with the Japanese that guaranteed French sovereignty over Indochina while allowing Japanese troops access to the north of the country (Jennings, 2001:139). This freed the Japanese from the problem of colonial administration, but even from October 1940 the Japanese plan was the eventual removal of the French in Indochina (Elsbree, 1953:17).

Pressure on the French now emerged from Thailand which wanted to recover territory it had ceded to the French at the beginning of the century. Decoux ordered further mobilisation of indigenous troops to defend its western borders (Marr, 1980:117). Dissatisfaction in the colonial army led to a communist-inspired general insurrection in November 1940 that spread across eight provinces in Cochinchina and involved tens of thousands of peasants. This was the first time the red flag with yellow star,

now the flag of the DRVN, had been used in Vietnam. The French response was again brutal, resulting in thousands killed and eight thousand detained. More than one hundred ICP cadres were executed (Marr, 1980:117-118). Meanwhile, the border war with Thailand flared and the French navy in Indochina responded by attacking and destroying the Thai fleet. The Japanese mediated between the two countries and in January 1941 resolved the issue in favour of Thailand (Marr, 1980:110). January 1941 also saw another uprising when an indigenous garrison mutinied in Nghệ An Province in northern Annam (Vien, 1993:225).

In April 1941 the Japanese signed a neutrality pact with the USSR which freed the Japanese to pursue their southern expansion. The first of a series of annual economic agreements between Hanoi and the Japanese re-oriented the Indochinese economy towards Japan. Hồ Chí Minh returned from China and established the Việt Minh which became the main anti-Japanese influence in the country and in the middle of 1941 began a vitriolic denunciation of Decoux as collaborator with the Japanese fascists (Marr, 1980:118). July 1941 saw a rapid escalation of tensions. An army of Free French, Australian, British and other troops attacked and defeated the pro-Vichy, French-colonial government in Syria. This force was led by General Catroux who had joined the Free French after his replacement as Governor-General of Indochina by Decoux twelve months earlier (Gilbert, 1999:374). This emphasised the threat of an allied invasion of Indochina.

The German invasion of Russia in June 1941 was a trigger for the Japanese occupation of the rest of Indochina in July 1941 and the establishment of their 'Southern Region' military headquarters in Saigon (Nitz, 1983). Decoux's acceptance of the expansion of the Japanese occupation into southern Indochina was partly to protect Indochina from an expected, and planned, invasion by a joint British, Free French and Chinese force (Andrus & Greene, 1944:372; Hammer, 1954:23). The US, British and Dutch (government in exile) responded with an embargo on oil and steel exports to Japan and seized all Japanese assets in the US, Britain and the Dutch East Indies, which directly led to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 8 December 1941 in a move to secure their access to resources in Southeast Asia (Kennedy, 1987:343). To avoid administrative and economic upheaval, the Japanese confirmed French sovereignty in Indochina on 9 December (Hammer, 1954:28).

The Japanese rapidly expanded into Burma, the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore and Indonesia and by March 1942 most resistance in these countries had ended (Hall, 1970:818). In February that year the Japanese moved their Southern Army headquarters to Singapore but southern Vietnam remained a major supply base for the Japanese forces in Southeast Asia, and Indochina remained an important source of raw materials (Nitz, 1983:334). Most Japanese troops now left Indochina for the warfronts in Southeast Asia leaving a garrison of between twenty and thirty-five thousand troops in Indochina where they occupied key cities but rarely went into the countryside (Andrus & Greene, 1944:380; Hammer, 1954:30). In each of the countries that the Japanese occupied in 1942, the non-indigenous, colonial administrators and residents were interned in line with the Japanese propaganda of Asia for the Asians, further highlighting the fragility of the French position in Indochina (Hall, 1970:820). In May 1942 the British occupied another French colony, Madagascar, and by November 1942 there were no African colonies remaining under the control of the Vichy regime (Jennings, 2001:3, 39).

In June 1942, the Battle of Midway inflicted a critical blow against the Japanese navy and is taken as the turning point in the war in the Pacific (Hall, 1970:823). The external threats to the French in Indochina now came from the possibility of an allied invasion. The allies began a coordinated counter-attack against the Japanese in the Pacific and in Burma in early 1943 (Hall, 1970:823). The war began to go badly for the Japanese in 1943 and they began a programme of declaring independence in Burma, the Philippines and in Indonesia, to gain support among those indigenous populations. In Indochina the Japanese increased pressure on the French administration for further economic concessions. Indochina was already paying for the Japanese occupation (Hammer, 1954:29). Decoux resisted so the Japanese openly supported the Cao Đài and Hòa Hảo religious sects around Saigon such that by 1943 they were beginning to offer a real pro-independence, non-communist opposition to both the French and the ICP. In late 1943, the Japanese provided protection for Cao Đài leaders during French attempts to suppress the movement (Smith, 1978:271).

With the presence of armed foreigners throughout the country it became increasingly important for Vietnamese people to support one of three alternatives: they could be pro-Vichy, pro-Japanese or pro-Allies (Marr, 1980:113). The Japanese had developed

close relationships with the religious groups in the south where Japanese resources were concentrated, but there was a lack of mass religious groups in Annam and Tonkin, so their allegiances were less coherent in these regions (Smith, 1978:274). As the war progressed the ICP supported, and was supported by, the allies because the Việt Minh represented the only anti-Japanese element in Indochina from 1941. The French favoured developing relations with the Vietnamese elite.

### **2-6-2 The pro-Vichy colonial government of Admiral Decoux**

The years 1940–45 are often referred to as the Japanese years in the history of Indochina, however, this overlooks the activities of the pro-Vichy administration of Admiral Decoux. Following the Japanese occupation in 1940, the main objective of the French administration was to maintain the colonial *status quo* until the end of the war (Marr, 1980:113). They had been guaranteed administrative authority in Indochina by the Japanese who wanted to maintain administrative and economic stability in the country. However, the French were constantly aware of the fragility of their position under the Japanese, and had to continually compete with the Japanese for the support of the Vietnamese. Unable to participate in the war in any way, the Decoux administration put their energy into a programme of social reconstruction in Indochina under the banner of the ‘National Revolution’ following a similar programme introduced by Marshall Pétain in France. The National Revolution in Indochina transferred almost intact the ideology and regimentation of Pétain, to the point that between 1940 and 1944 Pétain’s portrait and slogans were displayed on walls all over Indochina (Jennings, 2001:131).

The National Revolution in France had three main themes, authenticity, tradition and folklore, and promoted ideas of hierarchy, obedience and family (Jennings, 2001:143). Another significant theme was the promotion of a ‘return to the soil’ because Pétain, and similarly Decoux in Indochina, believed that urbanism and the migration of people from rural areas to the cities was responsible for the moral decline of society (Raffin, 2005:167). A major objective of the National Revolution in Indochina, as in France, became the rejuvenation of society through the training and moral development of young people. In Indochina Decoux found parallel themes between Pétainism and Confucian philosophy that suggested a common understanding with the Indochinese elite. The recognition of Indochina’s glorious

past and the encouragement of local patriotic themes were useful in distinguishing the Indochinese from the Japanese who were promoting Asia for the Asians and the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere that would integrate East and Southeast Asian economies to the exclusion of Europeans. In response, Decoux showed deference to the Emperor and often participated in royal events. He introduced comparability in pay for Indochinese administrators doing the same level of work as the French and promoted many mandarins to high administrative posts (Hammer, 1954:32). Jennings (2001:167) has noted three objectives for the colonial regime in a report of 1942:

- the creation of a stable social state through the fusion of ancient tradition while taking account of the needs of an evolving Indochinese society;
- respect for local nationalisms guiding the development of local elites in the direction of traditions; and,
- the development of federal solidarity among the countries that made up the Indochinese Union.

Decoux depended on two main agencies for support in the introduction of the National Revolution, the navy and the *Légion Française des Combattants et des Volontaires de la Révolution Nationale*. Many naval officers, unable to participate in the war, were given the responsibility of organising youth groups. The Legion provided the non-naval leadership in the implementation of the National Revolution. Decoux considered opening an associate membership of the Legion to the Vietnamese elite, but opted to maintain the policy of racial segregation. The Legion was popular among conservative French colonialists, although membership was compulsory for some key figures in the administration. The leader of the Legion in Hué was the local Director of Education, Lafferanderie. Several of his colleagues in Hué were prominent residents of OBM.

Chapter 3 will discuss the introduction of federalism as part of a review of French colonial policy. Here the emphasis is towards the theme of regeneration through youth because that incorporates the first two points above and introduces themes reflected in the heritage of OBM.

### **2-6-3 Regeneration through youth**

Pétain saw that reform of French society was necessary because it had succumbed to the ‘cult of ease’ and that the leaders of tomorrow could be developed through a combination of appropriate physical and moral training of young people (Raffin, 2005:20). Decoux recognised the same problem in Indochina and set up a ministry of Physical Education, Sport and Youth headed by navy Captain Maurice Ducoroy to coordinate the establishment of youth training and sports groups throughout Indochina. Existing church groups and Boy Scout troops were encouraged to expand, and many new youth and sports groups formed. The government embarked on a major public works programme that developed new sports facilities throughout Indochina. Many youth groups employed naval and military officers in training roles as the French military was limited to domestic peace-keeping operations during the Japanese occupation. Raffin (2005:164) commented on how the civilianisation of the military inevitably led to the increasing militarisation of the youth groups. Decoux’s relations with Vietnamese society was focused on the politically conservative elite, but he recognised that the leaders of tomorrow must be drawn from all classes, selected on merit, and that sport and youth groups were a mechanism for involving young people from a diversity of social groups (Raffin, 2005:165).

Ducoroy established a hierarchical network of training camps, many of them in rural locations, including hill stations, to ‘protect’ the young trainees from the temptations of urbanism. The camps at Phan Thiêt, a coastal town east of Saigon, were at the top of the hierarchical pyramid of training camps. There were two camps there in rural settings, that implanted ‘austere almost monk like’ ideals in their trainees (Jennings, 2001:191). The first focused on physical training and the second on leadership training. Graduates themselves became youth trainers. A similar centre at Sam Son north of Vinh in northern Annam was run by a Catholic priest and had the motto ‘A leader is formed through discipline, obedience and suffering’ (Jennings, 2001:194). At Ba Vi Hill Station northwest of Hanoi the religious analogy was repeated at what became known as Notre-Dame du Bavi where the camp integrated Pétainism, the cult of youth and vigour, and Catholicism. In Bạch Mã the Scouts had a similar training camp, and a second youth camp appears on a map of OBM although no historical information about that establishment was revealed during this study. Already by

December 1941, four thousand young people had attended Vichy summer camps (Jennings, 2001:195).

The ideals of Scouting influenced many of the youth groups established under the Vichy regime. Raffin (2005:167) noted four common characteristics between the philosophy of Baden-Powell and the Vichy youth project. Firstly, there is the recognition of the importance of maintaining social and political unity in the face of internal or external threats. Secondly, there is the premise that developing healthy habits among young people is a source of national strength. Third, both Baden-Powell and Pétain saw that their nations were collapsing from within as a result of migration to the cities and a general deficiency of patriotism among young men. Finally, youth instructors needed to develop the mental, moral and physical abilities of young people, not just instruct them. In 1941, Christian Schlemmer, the son of Raymond Schlemmer who had established the Scout Camp at Bạch Mã in 1937, wrote in the *Indochine* magazine that in France, the National Revolution policy on youth represented the essential ‘scoutizing’ of ‘France by building in each youngster character, good manners, health, a spirit to serve a high ideal, religion and morals’ (Raffin, 2005:176). Doubtless he saw the same influence in Indochina. In 1942, however, there was concern expressed by the police that the patriotic issues being taught in the youth groups and camps could potentially be a source of nationalism in the future (Raffin, 2005:120)

It is in the Scouting movement that the struggle between the ICP and the Vichy regime for the loyalty of Indochinese young people is most clearly played out. While the ideals of Scouting infused the Vichy youth project, Marr (1981:374-5), describing Hồ Chí Minh’s first publication, *Road to Revolution* published in 1927 and designed as a training manual for Youth League recruits, noted that Hồ’s list of twenty-three ethical maxims for potential revolutionaries includes only one that might not be found in a Boy Scout manual, ‘Know how to keep your secrets’. But perhaps even that might be a scouting principle given Baden-Powell’s association with military intelligence during WWI (Hillcourt, with Olave, 1964). Hồ’s first contact with the Scout Movement probably dates to 1915 when he attended a scout camp in France (Quỳnh, 1996:12). After his return to Indochina, in 1943, there was a directive for the

Việt Minh to introduce their propaganda campaign among young scouts and that ICP members needed to be active within the movement (Raffin, 2005:121).

## **2-7 Mounting crisis, 1944 -46**

There had been a period of optimism among the French colonisers through 1943 perhaps reflected in Decoux's plan to create a federal administrative capital in Đà Lạt. Also in 1943, Emperor Bảo Đại awarded Decoux the title Prince Protector of the Empire, an honour that was formally bestowed in Đà Lạt on 23 July 1943 (Decoux, 1949:144). Throughout 1943, however, there was also the constant threat of invasion from the north, from the Chinese nationalist army and US forces that occupied southwest China north of the border with Tonkin. By late 1943 aerial bombing of Tonkin had begun by US bombers based in southern China (Marr, 1980:102).

In early 1944 the Japanese redeployed troops from Central Vietnam to reinforce the Burmese front and to support an offensive against southern China (Nitz, 1983:336; Smith, 1978:277). The reduction of the Japanese presence allowed US bombing to extend south into northern Annam destroying the railway and disrupting coastal shipping. Decoux became increasingly uncooperative towards the Japanese, resulting in new plans by the Japanese to remove the French in Indochina (Nitz, 1983:336).

The allied invasion of Europe resulted in the removal of the French Vichy government by the end of July 1944 (Marr, 1980:119). Free French elements in Indochina now began to organise resistance to the Japanese, a move forbidden by Decoux under Vichy rule. De Gaulle's provisional government maintained Decoux as Governor-General despite his collaboration with the Japanese, and refused to accept the idea of Vietnamese autonomy, in opposition to the ongoing US attitude favouring independence. The Free French resistance refused to cooperate with the Việt Minh, until then the only anti-Japanese voice in Indochina (Marr, 1980:119).

There were already rice shortages in Tonkin and northern Annam by mid-1944 as a consequence of crop substitution to supply war resources, and the destruction of transport systems that normally supplied southern rice to the Red River Delta during seasonal shortages. Bad weather in October and November resulted in a crop failure and the beginning of a famine that lasted through 1945 (Marr, 1980:113). By the end



of 1945, up to two million people in Tonkin and northern Annam had died of starvation (Marr, 1995:104). The Free French in Tonkin were unable to stop the ongoing confiscation of rice reserves by the Japanese despite the increasing famine. They also refused to arm the Việt Minh in the north. The year 1944 closed with famine, expectations of an impending allied invasion, and for the French, a growing sense that the Japanese had plans to overthrow them in Indochina (Nitz, 1983:338). This latter fear became a reality for the French in March 1945 when the Japanese did overthrow them. The events of 1945 are complex and extensive and a detailed review is beyond the scope of this study. The following few paragraphs will provide a brief overview as it is relevant to Central Vietnam, the focus of this study.

Despite apparently anticipating a Japanese move against them, the French did little to counter it. At that time the French military strength was slightly stronger than the Japanese, but their troops were not battle hardened, and a pre-emptive strike risked the humiliation of a defeat that might threaten their future hold on Indochina (Marr, 1995:50-1). On 9 March 1945, General Matsumoto presented Governor-General Decoux with an ultimatum that, because of the threat of an imminent allied invasion, Decoux must place all French troops under Japanese command. Decoux was unable to accept or counter the demand because the communications at the palace had been cut, and the Japanese assumed full control of Indochina. The French military were detained in several barracks and French civilians were relocated to seven major centres, Hanoi, Vinh, Huế, Nha Trang, Saigon, Phnom Penh and Vientiane. There they were required to leave their doors unlocked and gatherings of more than three people were forbidden. The Japanese requested that the French remain at their administrative posts. Some did and some were still occupying key positions in the post office, the railway and ports as late as August 1945 (Marr, 1995:66).

The Japanese installed a new government in Huế under Emperor Bảo Đại that re-incorporated Tonkin and Annam, but in practice the Japanese simply replaced the French, occupying the key management positions including that of Governor-General. Emperor Bảo Đại appointed a new government headed by pro-Japanese Trần Trọng Kim. This government was severely limited in what it could do in the face of limited communications, war shortages and its isolation in Central Vietnam (Marr, 1995). Although the Japanese requested that the French remain at their posts, in many cases

the indigenous administrators took over management and resented any continued oversight by the French. There was growing distrust and anger at the French who remained under Japanese protection. The Việt Minh took advantage of the removal of the French, and recognising the imminent end of the war and Japanese occupation, began organising throughout the country. Tạ Quang Bửu, one of the founders and former leader of the Bạch Mã Boy Scouts Camp now worked for the new Youth Minister in the Trần Trọng Kim government, organising the youth and sporting groups around Huế into paramilitary groups (Raffin, 2005:195).

Following the end of WWII Vietnam became increasingly drawn into the global political and economic restructuring that developed into the Cold War and it is at this point that Vietnam became the focus for writers and analysts in the West from all political perspectives. In July 1945 the Potsdam Conference at which the US, Britain and Russia negotiated the organisation of post-war Europe, also negotiated the management of post-war Indochina. The country was to be divided at the sixteenth parallel of latitude, just south of Tourane. North of that the Chinese nationalist army was to be responsible for accepting the Japanese surrender and their subsequent repatriation to Japan. South of the sixteenth parallel the British were to have the same responsibility (Hall, 1970:799).

Following the Japanese capitulation on 14 August the Việt Minh took control and established committees to manage the administration in most cities and towns across Vietnam. French citizens remaining in Hanoi were harassed and threatened and many French houses were pillaged by angry Vietnamese groups roaming the city (Marr, 1995:65). The French banded together and kept as low a profile as possible. Hồ Chí Minh declared independence for Vietnam on 2 September in Hanoi and a few days later Emperor Bảo Đại abdicated in recognition of the widespread public support for the Việt Minh. The British force under General Gracey arrived in Saigon on 13 September with several hundred additional French troops. They found a national committee, with the support of the Việt Minh, had assumed administrative control in Saigon. With British military support the small French force, with the assistance of about a thousand French troops that had been imprisoned in Saigon for the previous six months, occupied the main public buildings around Saigon and resumed control of the city. The Việt Minh and nationalist forces retired to the countryside and

blockaded the city. The French began a slow pacification of the countryside, an objective they never achieved (Hall, 1970:799).

In the north, the Chinese allowed the Việt Minh government to continue to operate and refused access to French armed forces, until in February 1946 the French agreed to withdraw their interests in China, provide concessions to the Chinese on the Yunnan-Haiphong railway and to give special consideration to Chinese nationals within Indochina. In exchange the Chinese withdrew from Indochina. The rest of the year involved a series of conferences and negotiations between the French and Vietnamese government for French access to the northern half of the country. Hồ Chí Minh's administration was not rigidly opposed to the French, but they demanded a high degree of autonomy in a new Union. Relations broke down following the failure of the French to honour earlier promises and in November the French bombed Haiphong killing six thousand Vietnamese people. On 19 December the Việt Minh attacked a series of French garrisons and full scale war broke out between the French and the Vietnamese, referred to as the First Indochina War. The Việt Minh forces withdrew from Hanoi, but the French were never able to pacify the countryside. In 1946-47 the French had to fight their way back into the major cities in Tonkin and Annam, including Huế (Hall, 1970:849).

## **2-8 The First Indochina war 1946 - 1954**

The First Indochina War went badly for the French and became increasingly unpopular at home because of its cost in lives and money. They were never able to control areas outside the main cities and the Việt Minh continued to gain popularity among the peasantry. During the last years of the 1940s the international political environment moved into the Cold War. In Europe a rift between East and West, between communism and capitalism, widened. In early 1948 there was a communist coup in Czechoslovakia and the beginning of a communist blockade of the Western occupation zones of Berlin. In 1949 the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) created a military balance of power that threatened to turn into another major war. The communist victory in China in 1949 heightened tensions in Asia. One of the first foreign policy decisions of the new Chinese communist government was the formal recognition of the Việt Minh government of Hồ Chí Minh which was countered the following month by the US and British recognition of the

Bảo Đại government in southern Vietnam (Hall, 1970:804). Communist insurrections occurred in Malaya and Burma in 1948 that were more nationalist struggles for independence than communist revolutions (Lawrence, 2008:36). With the escalation of tensions in the international arena following the Chinese declaration of support, the US took over the main financial burden of the First Indochina War, contributing as much as eighty per cent of the war budget by 1953 (Hall, 1970:804). In early 1954, as negotiations for a political settlement between the Vietnamese and the French were beginning, the French suffered a major defeat in the battle for Điện Biên Phủ which led to a French withdrawal of all forces into southern Vietnam. The French lost some fifty thousand men killed in action during the eight year war, while there were between four and five hundred thousand deaths on the Vietnamese side (Aldrich, 1996:288).

The Geneva conference of 1954 divided Vietnam again into two, this time at the seventeenth parallel, thereby placing Huế and Đà Nẵng within South Vietnam. Huế became the major town south of the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) established across the new border. The division of the country was to last until a referendum scheduled for 1956 to decide the political future of the country, however, the South Vietnamese government of President Ngô Đình Diệm failed to order an election and the joint chairs of the Geneva conference, Britain and Russia, failed to insist on compliance (Lawrence, 2008:58).

### **2-9 The postcolonial period: 1954 – 1991**

The Geneva agreement of 1954 had provided for independence for South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos within the French Union. However during 1955 and 1956 all three countries introduced new constitutions that excluded any mention of their participation in the French Union. Bitter at the increasing influence of the US in Indochina's affairs, the French finally withdrew their military forces from Indochina and any remaining influence they had (Hall, 1970:831; Lawrence, 2008:58). The new Diệm regime was faced with huge reconstruction problems following the eight years of the First Indochina War. However, the government proved increasingly corrupt and inefficient. A five year plan to boost economic development began in 1957 with very limited results in coal mining and industrialisation. It included a programme of resettlement of landless poor into highland areas, which if partly successful in the

settlement of the Southern and Central Highlands by the Vietnamese, was a very half-hearted response to a much needed land redistribution programme in the south to deal with enormous inequities left over from the colonial era (Hall, 1970:833).

In the late 1950s, crackdowns by Diêm on communist organisers who had been active in the countryside of South Vietnam since 1954 was successful in reducing the communist presence, but the tactic of forced removal of people from their ancestral land to fortified villages made the South Vietnamese government even more unpopular among its own people (Lawrence, 2008:65). Mounting discontent led to an unsuccessful coup attempt in 1960 by members of Diêm's own army. By 1962 the Diêm regime had lost the support of as much as seventy-five per cent of the population who now supported the communists, either voluntarily or through fear. Another coup in 1963 was successful and resulted in Diêm's death (Cornwell, 1980:496).

### **2-9-1 The Second Indochina War 1963 - 1975**

The US did not want to be involved in a war between the north and the south, but was committed to supporting South Vietnam in the context of the Cold War. By 1961 South Vietnam was the fifth largest recipient of US foreign aid (Lawrence, 2008:60). The US also provided advisers to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), commencing in 1955 and gradually increasing to 1300 in 1961 and 16,000 by 1963 (Cornwell, 1980:496). John F. Kennedy, the new US President in 1961, was fearful that a communist victory in Indochina would spread though Southeast Asia in a 'domino effect'. He and Lyndon B. Johnson, his successor in 1964, escalated the war. In 1964, Johnson used a naval incident in the Gulf of Tonkin to boost US forces to 150,000 by the end of 1965. US aerial bombing of North Vietnam began in 1965 (Smith, 1991:30). As well as US forces, smaller contingents were sent by South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, the Philippines and Taiwan, all concerned to stop the spread of communism in the region, and in exchange for US economic concessions (Lawrence, 2008:111).

Between 1965 and 1969 the US troop presence in South Vietnam rose to half a million troops before President Richard Nixon began a programme of withdrawal in 1969. By 1972 US troop numbers had been reduced to 40,000. The period between

1965 and 1969 was the most devastating for both sides of the conflict. Two specific events are of direct relevance to the present study: the Tết offensive and the ‘Hamburger Hill’ battle. In January 1968 a North Vietnamese offensive launched at Tết (the Vietnamese Lunar New Year festival) was completely unanticipated by the US and ARVN forces. The Tết offensive struck five of the six major cities in South Vietnam, thirty-six out of forty-four provincial capitals and sixty-four district capitals and resulted in a six hour fire-fight between NVA and US troops to control the US embassy in Saigon (Lawrence, 2008:122). Most of the NVA gains were recovered by US and ARVN forces over the next few days. In Huế, however, 7500 NVA and NLF (National Liberation Front – South Vietnamese communist forces often referred to as Viet Cong) occupied the city. It took four weeks of house-to-house fighting before US and ARVN troops regained control on 4 March 1968 at a cost of five hundred US and ARVN dead and ten times that number of NVA soldiers. Almost three thousand ARVN soldiers and civilians were killed during the NVA occupation of Huế. The whole Tết offensive saw 58,000 communist combatants killed. Following Tết the US intensified their operations making 1968 the costliest year of the war with 14,500 US deaths and another 46,000 wounded, while the communist forces lost an estimated 60,000 killed and 120,000 wounded (Lawrence, 2008:131-2).

The NVA stronghold in the A Shau Valley, just across the border in Laos, about sixty kilometres southwest of Huế, was considered the NVA’s principal infiltration route into South Vietnam, and a major threat to Huế and Đà Nẵng (Millet, 1974:23-4). Repeated attacks on the A Shau valley and Ap Bia Mountain between 1966 and 1971 were only ever successful in removing the NVA presence for a few weeks, and always at great cost to US and ARVN forces. In early 1969, a major operation called ‘Kentucky Jumper’ was launched by the US and ARVN forces to interdict NVA supply and communication lines in the vicinity of Huế and Đà Nẵng (101st Airborne, 1969). In May 1969, as part of this ongoing operation, a battle to occupy Ap Bia Mountain, about forty kilometres west of Bạch Mã, became known as ‘Hamburger Hill’ by US troops because of the high casualty figures: 430 US, 527 ARVN fatalities and 5686 NVA dead. The losses in this battle were a source of criticism for the war in Washington and resulted in assurances that the US strategy in Vietnam had not expanded to occupy new territory (Millet, 1974:70-1). It was influential in President Nixon’s decision to begin withdrawing US troops from Vietnam. Continuing

Operation Kentucky Jumper, the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, that had been in the Hamburger Hill assault in May, launched an airborne assault on Bạch Mã Mountain in July 1969, but without engaging NVA forces, although they found arms stores and military documents in their sweep of the mountain (Higle, 1969).

By 1972 US troop numbers were down to about 40,000. In January 1973 the US, South Vietnam, North Vietnam and the South Vietnam Communists signed a ceasefire agreement and the remaining US combat forces withdrew from Vietnam. Fighting continued in South Vietnam despite the ceasefire until a final offensive launched in March 1975 resulted in a victory for North Vietnam at the end of April 1975 followed by the reunification of the country into the DRVN (Lawrence, 2008:167).

## **2-9-2 Reunification and Renovation**

Following reunification of Vietnam the three former French colonies, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, shared a Leninist model of ‘mono-organisational socialism’, and were dependent on the Soviet Union for trade, aid, investment and military support (Thayer, 1995-9). Attempts to transfer the socialist economy to South Vietnam failed because of the entrenched market economy in the south and the associated bourgeois and petit bourgeois classes (Beresford, 1993:216). Combined with purges and retribution, ongoing poverty, hunger and high unemployment, the steady stream of refugees fleeing Indochina turned into a flood. By 1979, tens of thousands of people every month were departing (Frost, 1980:348). This was exacerbated in December 1978 when Vietnam responded to provocative attacks along its border by Cambodians with a full scale invasion of Cambodia. In January 1979, pro-Hanoi elements within the Khmer Communist Party established the Democratic People’s Republic of Kampuchea following the retreat of the Pol Pot regime (Duiker, 1981:337). China, which had been in conflict with the Soviet Union since the 1960s, concluded that the Vietnamese action in Cambodia was in support of Moscow’s imperialist ambitions in Southeast Asia. In February 1979 the Chinese attacked Vietnam on her northern border with a punitive strike that had trouble extending more than a few kilometres over the border after two weeks of fighting (Huynh Kim Khanh, 1980:339). Vietnam occupied Cambodia until 1989 which led to its isolation internationally and stifled development of its economy.

By the mid-1980s pressure for reform from the people coincided with a period of liberal reform and glasnost in the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev. The Vietnamese government responded with a major shift of policy under the label of ‘doi moi’ (renovation) which dismantled bureaucratic centralised planning, introduced elements of a market economy and de-collectivised agriculture (Thayer, 1995:9). In the late 1980s as the economic difficulties in the Soviet Union increased, trade between Vietnam and the Soviet economic bloc collapsed, Vietnam reoriented its economy and trade to the west and withdrew from Cambodia. Even before the economic reform was implemented, Vietnam began an assessment of environmental issues in the country and in collaboration with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) developed a conservation strategy that identified threats to Vietnam’s biodiversity. In 1986 it established a network of parks and reserves dedicated to conserving and maintaining biodiversity (Sterling, Hurley, & Le Duc Minh, 2006:352). As part of that process Bạch Mã - Hải Vân was identified as one of seven national parks to be created. Environmental assessments began to identify proposed boundaries for the national park and Bạch Mã National Park was formally established by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on 15 July 1991 (Anon., 1990). It incorporated 22,000 hectares located on the northern side of the provincial border between Thừa Thiên - Huế and Quảng Nam Provinces.

Vietnam has continued its development of environmental conservation strategies. In 1994 they ratified the Convention on Biodiversity and the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES). In 1995 they developed a Biodiversity Action Plan and in 2001 implemented a National Strategy for Environmental Protection, 2001-2010 (Sterling, Hurley, & Le Duc Minh, 2006:354-7). This recognition of the importance, and development, of legislation supporting environmental conservation has developed alongside industrial and economic development in the 1990s. In the first decade of the twenty-first century Vietnam has seen GDP growth figures similar to that of China. This has had a significant impact on reducing poverty (Brown & Lee Tang Keat, 2007:1). It remains, like many emerging economies, particularly susceptible to international financial contractions. As well, events that affect tourism, such as outbreaks of influenza, have had a significant impact on Central Vietnam in particular.



## **2-10 Summary**

This chapter has outlined the colonial history of Central Vietnam, noting that the French association with the region dates from the seventeenth century. The association was always characterised by collaboration and resistance from elements of the Vietnamese elite. The Vietnamese nobility collaborated with the French to secure their political domination over their rivals, and to get access to Western technology and knowledge. At the same time, the Vietnamese resisted French religious proselytising. The Vietnamese elite were at the forefront of resistance at the beginning of the colonial occupation and were always seeking greater recognition and political autonomy, while adopting the benefits of a French education. During the early decades of the twentieth century, European prestige among the Vietnamese was damaged by the defeat of Russia by Japan in 1905 and by WWI. In the 1920s, continued French failure to implement promised reforms and a growing understanding of the contrast between the French republican ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, as it was expressed in the *metropole* and in the colonies, led to a growing number of pro-nationalist organisations among the Vietnamese bourgeoisie. Resistance extended to the proletariat and the peasantry by 1930, with an increasing influence from the new ICP.

From 1930, the French perspective of their own security in Indochina deteriorated as a consequence of growing internal threats from indigenous nationalist forces and externally from Japan. It was within this context that OBM was established. In the late 1930s, with WWII beginning in Europe and the Japanese threatening from China, OBM and the other hill stations of Indochina experienced a new level of development. The French anxiety was well deserved as the Japanese occupation of Indochina proved in 1940-41. WWII and the Japanese occupation only shifted concern among the French from the threat of Japan, now a *fait accompli*, to a potential invasion by the allies. The main change to the colonial venture was in the character of the colonial administration which reverted to levels of authoritarianism and suppression of dissent not seen in the country since colonisation in the nineteenth century. Decoux was popular among the conservative colonial community that supported his strategy of rebuilding the colonial venture through the National Revolution, and it was at that time that the rate of development at OBM reached its peak. But despite their pitch for

indigenous support and the continuing collaboration of elements from the Vietnamese elite, the French remained under threat from both internal and external forces.

In 1945 the French were overthrown by the Japanese and northern Vietnam was ravaged by a famine that was a direct consequence of WWII and the French collaboration with the Japanese during the war. The vast majority of Vietnamese were never able to accept France's wish to renew its colonial occupation from where it had left off in 1945. The following thirty years of war showed the determination of the Vietnamese not to submit to foreign domination. The cost to the Vietnamese people, to the economy and to the environment was immeasurable.

This chapter has focused on Indochina and Vietnam, the experience of colonialism in the region, the struggle for independence and the struggle for survival of the former French colonies in the postcolonial world. The experience of Indochina was typical, if extreme, of the experience of many Asian and African countries in the twentieth century. Many of the developments and events reviewed here were influential in the development and events that happened in Bạch Mã Mountain between 1930 and 1991. The reason for elaborating the historical events is that each period, the French colonial occupation to 1954, the postcolonial period to 1963, and the Second Indochina War to 1975, each had its own impact on Bạch Mã Mountain. Only through understanding the times can the growth and decline of OBM be interpreted. The next chapter will examine the broad issue of colonialism and postcolonial independence to delineate the themes used to approach the study of Bạch Mã which, as Chapter 1 argued, is itself a symbol of European colonialism in Asia. Chapter 3 reviews the development of French colonial policy, particularly in relation to issues of colonial cultural relations.

## Chapter 3 French imperialism in Central Vietnam

### 3-1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a theoretical discussion of imperialism as it was expressed in European colonialism of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Theories of imperialism are useful in the analysis of individual examples of colonial activity, such as at OBM, because they help explain some of the social, political and economic forces at work in international relations, and can help identify underlying philosophies of the participants in a colonial situation. Imperialism has attracted several alternative perspectives during the twentieth century. Some of the ideas of later writers, in particular the writing by Ronald Robinson from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, have been helpful in explaining aspects of the French colonial occupation in Central Vietnam in the early twentieth century. The objective here is not to critique the theories of imperialism but to identify themes and issues associated with imperialism that may be evident in OBM and that might offer some insight into the significance of the site and the material heritage from the colonial era.

Chapter 1 argued that the hill stations of Asia are symbols of European imperialism of the nineteenth and twentieth century, because hill stations were developed by European colonists in almost all South and Southeast Asian countries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Robinson (1972:118-9) has defined imperialism thus:

Imperialism in the industrial era is a process whereby agents of an expanding society gain inordinate influence or control over the vitals of weaker societies by ‘dollar’ and ‘gun-boat’ diplomacy, ideological suasion, conquest and rule, or by planting colonies of its own people abroad. The object is to shape or reshape them in its own interest and more or less in its own image.

This definition seems apt considering that hill stations were generally built in landscapes and using architectural styles that reflected the environment and culture of the *metropole*, be it Britain, France or Holland, and were intended to offer the colonists a piece of the *metropole* in the tropical environment of the colonies (Jennings, 2003:160; Kennedy, 1996:3). Since the word, ‘imperialism’, first came into use at the end of the nineteenth century many definitions have been proposed, tailored to the perspective with which various researchers of imperialism have

approached the topic. The underlying social and political forces that led to the development of European empires in the nineteenth century have attracted the interest of many important theorists, beginning with Karl Marx, although the word ‘imperialism’ was not used until after his death (Wolfe, 1997:388). This thesis interprets the words ‘colonialism’ and ‘imperialism’ as having the same meaning. However, colonialism is more generally used in relation to the French occupation of Annam and OBM.

A general discussion about imperialism in this chapter is followed by a more detailed review of French colonial policy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with particular emphasis on the development of ideas about the appropriate relationship between the coloniser and colonised. This subject was contemplated in France from the mid-nineteenth century. In the 1890s a new debate developed about the appropriateness of ‘assimilation’ of indigenous colonised populations into a French cultural empire, as opposed to ‘association’, an approach that recognised the significance of cultural difference and gained acceptance in the early twentieth century under a series of liberal colonial regimes. During WWII under the Vichy regime, French colonial policy turned back to a more conservative approach. This was particularly the case in Indochina under the administration of Governor-General Decoux, which developed a policy of federalism that was claimed to offer a ‘third way’ between assimilation and association. As his predecessors had, Decoux was keen to express his vision of imperialism through architecture and urban planning. These policies are significant for the present study because they were expressed in the planning of urban developments in French colonies and were, therefore, instrumental in determining the character of OBM. The final part of the chapter addresses the planning and development of Đà Lạt, the premier hill station in Indochina, and a model for the development of OBM.

### **3-2 Theories of Imperialism**

Owen (1972:3) noted, in his introduction to the edited volume *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, that one of the most common uses of theory is to help understand ‘why something happened when it did’. Theories of imperialism, therefore, may help to explain why the construction of OBM occurred at the time that it did, as well as something of the nature of French colonialism in Central Vietnam at that time. One

of the principal ambiguities of OBM is the expression of its symbolism within the context of WWII and the Japanese occupation of Indochina.

According to Owen (1972:1), the theoretical debate about the origins and function of European imperialism has two main periods of development, first in the early part of the twentieth century as the European powers apportioned out between them the remaining areas of the underdeveloped world as colonial possessions. This part of the debate was dominated by Hobson and Lenin who both reflected on, and developed, Marx's analysis of capitalism (Wolfe, 1997:390). The second period of theoretical development was in the 1950s and the following two decades as the whole imperial structure was dismantled and scholars refined traditional theoretical perspectives in the context of a new world order.

Initially, European imperialism was interpreted as a strictly European construct since it was the European powers which had built empires that covered much of the globe. Hobson, for example, saw the colonisation of much of Asia and Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a consequence of economic expansion driven by the industrialisation of their economies as the European powers sought new sources of raw materials and new markets (Owen, 1972). The socialist perspective developed by Lenin was founded in the same type of economic analysis that placed Europe at the centre, and argued that imperialism was a consequence of the necessities of European monopoly capitalism, in the final stage of development, to export capital. Significantly, in the early twentieth century Lenin and other influential thinkers, such as Rosa Luxemburg and Rudolf Hilferding, considered that socialist revolutions in industrialising Europe were contingent on revolution in the Asian colonies where agrarian societies, led by a politically conscious, revolutionary vanguard from the industrialised West, would 'skip over' the capitalist mode of production and proceed straight to a socialist revolution (Wolfe, 1997:392-3). Schumpeter argued that imperialism was the consequence of the 'objectless drives of militaristic elites' (Doyle, 1986:21) or at least the need to secure strategic areas against rival European powers. This Eurocentric focus was later reinforced to a large extent by the perspective of Wallerstein whose World System Theory divided the world into centre and periphery, with the colonial possessions at the periphery

regardless of their individual histories and level of cultural development (Gosden, 2004:12).

As useful as these arguments are in helping to understand the genesis of the European colonial empires, they provide little insight into the character of colonialism half a century later. Robequain (1944:246) noted that in 1939 there was little information available on colonial development and investment in Central Vietnam. This is simply because there was very little investment. By the mid 1930s Ennis (1936:1) described the *pays* this way:

Annam, with 2516 Europeans and 5,182,000 natives spread over 146,660 square kilometres, [was] untouched economically, except for a few colonists, a modern arterial highway, and two spurs of the Indochinese Railroad’.

It will be clear later that the development of OBM consumed considerable resources over a surprisingly short period of time. There was little expectation of significant future industrial development following the economic crisis of the early 1930s, except perhaps in Tourane which had a port, although the Port of Tourane lacked deep water and shelter from the regular storms coming in from the Eastern Sea (South China Sea) (Robequain, 1944:125). The traditional economic theories of imperialism have limited potential to provide an insight into the nature of colonialism in the Protectorate of Annam as represented in OBM. They do, however, highlight the strategic significance of Central Vietnam whereby the French could not allow the British to occupy the territory in the late nineteenth century. Also, the French colonialists in the 1920s and 1930s must have been aware of Lenin’s suggestion that the agrarian societies in Asia would be at the forefront of socialist revolution, and doubtless influenced the severity of the French suppression of the ICP.

In the 1950s the traditional theories of imperialism were challenged by the arguments of Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher (Robinson, 1972; Robinson & Gallagher, 1953; Robinson, Gallagher, & with Denny, 1961) who argued that the theories focusing on the expansive economic and strategic necessities of the European nations were useful in understanding how the great empires of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were established (though incomplete), but were inadequate to explain how empires were held together over decades with a minimum of European

personnel and investment, colonialism ‘on the cheap’ (Robinson, 1972:120). Furthermore, they could not explain how small nationalist elites were able to convince the colonial powers to leave in the post WWII decolonisation period. They argued that it was essential to include the part played by indigenous elements within the colonised countries, for without the collaboration and/or mediation of indigenous elites, the maintenance of empire in an environment of ongoing nationalist resistance would have been impossible (Robinson, 1972:118).

Robinson and Gallagher’s thesis is based on the analysis of British imperialism.

Robinson (1972:122-3) noted that:

[the] military element in French imperialism ... often made it less dependent on mediators than the British, a situation which reflected the different expansive resources of a continental country with a large conscript army and an island dependent for its European security on a large navy’.

However, the underlying motives for collaboration had certainly been present throughout the French occupation of Indochina. Many of the Vietnamese elite wanted access to Western technology, trade, military and diplomatic aid, in a context of a feudal Vietnamese monarchy that had persisted in trying to isolate the country within an ancient, conservative, Chinese Confucianist ideology (Marr, 1971:28, 35).

Following WWI there seemed, to many, good reasons for optimism in a new era of development in the country under French leadership (M. Osborne, 1973). The French, under Governor-General Sarraut, had offered many benefits to the Indochinese, including increased autonomy, in appreciation of the substantial support in money and personnel sent to support the *metropole* during the war (Marr, 1981:68). Knight (1933:222) argued that the revolts in northern Annam in 1930-31 were as much about the failure of the French to implement their promises as about their protest against the French taxation system and land reform. Later in 1930 amidst the growing political unrest, Governor-General Pasquier renewed the promise of a much more cooperative environment (Jennings, 2001:134). What they got was architectural concessions in the form of incorporation of indigenous styles and motifs in government buildings in substitution for meaningful reform, suggesting the significance of architectural aesthetics in French political strategy (Wright, 1997:333). The necessity for the French to collaborate with elements of the indigenous

population is also clear. Very few French colonialists understood the indigenous languages or culture (Cooke, 1991:371), so that they were dependent on local elites for instituting any of their plans. Furthermore, colonialism 'on the cheap' depended on the acquiescence of the peasantry, provided through the mediation of the elite, as well as the support of the elite in the creation of a new economic model.

Robinson (1972:120) argued that collaborative and mediation networks necessarily remained integrated within indigenous society, but isolated and dispersed and rarely formed a cohesive interest group that might threaten the imperial occupation. From the point of view of the indigenous elite, they recognised that if the colonial power could not be excluded from the country, then they needed to exploit the situation to retain their social positions. He further argued that the incentives and rewards for collaboration and mediation had to be carefully balanced to be sustained, were partly commercial, but mainly governmental, 'the perquisites of office, honours, contracts, social services and all the favours that could be given or taken away through its administrative land' (Robinson, 1972:133). For any elite group that chose resistance, there was always another group that favoured collaboration. Furthermore, collaborative systems were constantly changing in response to changing economic and political conditions. Accordingly, Robinson (1972:123) argued that 'it might almost be said that the changing bargains of collaboration or mediation define the actual working of imperialism at the point of impact at a particular time'. He concluded that the organisation and character of modern colonial rule was determined more than anything by the choice of indigenous collaborators (Robinson, 1972:139).

Robinson's argument certainly reflects the nature of French/ Vietnamese collaboration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. If French collaboration with Vietnamese elites, and vice versa, was one aspect of French colonialism in Indochina, another was the domination of the non-elites, the peasantry and growing working class. Where the nature of collaboration varied in as much as the Vietnamese individuals varied over time as the political environment evolved, the domination of the non-elites remained almost constant. Domination, collaboration and resistance have been common themes in studies of colonialism and imperialism, particularly in colonial archaeology (McGuire & Paynter, 1991; Paynter & McGuire, 1991). It is these relationships of collaboration and resistance that suggest a



perspective in which to view OBM and to study the nature of colonialism in Central Vietnam through the archaeological and oral history evidence available at OBM. But before examining archaeological approaches to colonial issues, it is important to understand more fully the development of French colonial policy in relation to intercultural relations, under which OBM developed.

### **3-3 French colonial policy – a debate about assimilation or association; the relations between coloniser and colonised**

One of the major driving influences behind French colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the need to develop new sources of raw materials as well as markets for their rapidly industrialising economy. Perhaps as important was competition, not only for markets but for prestige among her European neighbours, in particular Britain, which had gained global colonial dominance at considerable cost to the French (Brunschwig, 1964:111). Underlying this competitive drive was a perception of French cultural and political superiority stemming from the 1789 revolution which had freed the French population from the burden of despotic feudalism and mysticism and made France the first modern democratic republic (Conklin, 1997). After the 1870-71 war with Prussia, when the French were forced to cede the territories of Alsace and Lorraine, prestige in Europe for the new French Third Republic (1870-1940) depended increasingly on acquiring additional territory overseas (Aldrich, 1996:97). It was France's revolutionary history and her republican ideals founded on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity that moved French politicians, administrators and philosophers to seek justification for what in practice was military occupation and suppression, followed by outright exploitation of the natural and human resources of occupied people. French colonial policy tried to address these ambiguities and contradictions implicit in its colonial occupations, largely without any great change in the living conditions for most Vietnamese (Ennis, 1936).

The French drive for colonial expansion during the later part of the nineteenth century, during which most of Indochina was brought under French 'protection', was driven partly as a response to their defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, and partly by their ambition to match British imperial achievements.

So powerful was the latter desire, and out of so long a tradition of Anglo-French rivalry in the Orient did it derive, that France seemed literally haunted by Britain, anxious in all things connected with the Orient to catch up with and emulate the British (Said, 1979:218).

Said (1979:218) went on to note that in the late 1870s the *Société académique indo-chinoise* formulated the goal of creating in Cochinchina a 'French India'. The French saw their defeat in 1871 as a consequence of military and commercial weakness 'to say nothing of long-standing and pronounced colonial inferiority compared to Britain'. According to Said (1979:216):

The important thing was to dignify simple conquest with an idea, to turn the appetite for more geographical space into a theory about the special relationship between geography on the one hand and civilized or uncivilized peoples on the other. But to these rationalizations there was also a distinctively French contribution.

The very term 'civilisation' is a French invention from the eighteenth century, but during the Third Republic the French made more and greater claims for its civilisation than at any other time (Conklin, 1997:1). The Third Republic claimed it had a duty and a right to 'civilise' the primitive cultures that were coming under its control, in the image of the cultural, political and economic development of France. The French adopted an ideology of a civilising mission (*mission civilisatrice*) (similar to Britain's 'white man's burden') within a public commitment to institutionalise the universal principles of 1789. By adopting categories of civilisation and its opposite 'barbarism', administrators were able to ignore the obvious contradiction between democracy and the military suppression and domination of a foreign country (Conklin, 1997:2). Conklin (1997:5-6) suggested that French imperial ideology adopted one category of civilisation in particular:

[M]astery. Mastery not of other peoples – although ironically this would become one of civilization's prerogatives in the age of democracy; rather mastery of nature, including the human body, and mastery of what can be called 'social behaviour'... It was because the French believed that they had triumphed over geography, climate, and disease to create new internal and external markets, and because they before all other nations had overcome oppression and superstition to form a democratic and rational government, that Republican France deemed itself so civilized.

Jules Ferry, an enthusiastic expansionist French Prime Minister at the time of the annexation of Tonkin and Annam as protectorates addressed Parliament in 1882 over the seizure of Tonkin:

We must believe that if Providence deigned to confer upon us a mission by making us masters of the earth, this mission consists not of attempting an impossible fusion of the races but of simply spreading or awakening among the races the superior notions of which we are the guardians. (quoted in Conklin, 1997:13)

Later, in 1884 he added that ‘the superior races have a right vis-à-vis the inferior races ... they have a right to civilize them’ (quoted in Conklin, 1997:13).

Many of the countries in Asia and the Middle East which the French (and the British) colonised had civilisations much older than that of any European country. China and Vietnam, for example, had thousands of years of recorded history which tended to undermine the *mission civilisatrice*. To justify the mission to civilise a highly cultured people, they had to emphasise the persistence of feudalism in the East by defining existing Asian governance as ignorant and its leadership as Oriental despots. Not only would colonisation involve the mastery of foreign geography and encourage commercial exchange, it would liberate peasants from political tyranny and superstition (Conklin, 1997:16).

After 1870 French colonial expansion in Indochina was in the guise of treaties establishing protectorates, which allowed the continuation of local institutions including the monarchies in Annam, Cambodia and Laos, but with a new level of overall control in the French Governor-General. Ironically, the French themselves adopted the role of Oriental despot, including many of the characteristics of the typical ‘masters of hydraulic society’ they were civilising (Wittfogel, 1957). The French drained and irrigated vast areas of the Mekong Delta for rice cultivation. Like the Oriental despots the French had total power, they claimed rights to employ *corvée* labour, indentured labour and even slaves to develop the commercial potential and infrastructure of the colony (Marr, 1971:96). Central Vietnam was one of the places that suffered most under the system of *corvée* labour (Marr, 1971:186), while remaining largely undeveloped.

Colonial policy naturally changed over time in response to changing conditions. During the nineteenth century the official policy that the French government established to define the relationship between France and the subject indigenous population was one of ‘assimilation’. Assimilation assumed that the colony would

become an integral part of the French Republic once the population had been ‘made over’ in the image of the French, in language and culture (Betts, 1961:8). The population in the colonies would have the same rights as the population of the *metropole* (Fieldhouse, 1981:37). Assimilation appealed to French principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, ideals with roots in revolutionary ideology: even the vocabulary of assimilation and republicanism were the same (Betts, 1961:30). Assimilation provided a basis for a uniform colonial administration. Under assimilation, French laws could simply be transplanted in the colonies.

About 1890, however, under the influence of social Darwinism, almost all theorists on French colonialism opposed assimilation as too rigid, unscientific and harmful (Betts, 1961). One writer in particular, Joseph Chailley, (he used the name Chailley-Bert to acknowledge the influence of his father-in-law, Paul Bert, Governor-General of Indochina in 1886 (Knight, 1933:210)) contributed a thesis in 1892 that argued that the French possessions in Indochina should be modelled after the English colonies of Hong Kong and Burma where local entrepreneurs were being encouraged to develop the economy. The English had a far more flexible approach to their colonies, both economically and socially. He outlined a series of rules that would assist the development of Indochina, such as instituting laws that were harmonious with the indigenous laws, restoring the system of the protectorate to gain the support of the local people, particularly in local defence, and improving education and public works (Betts, 1961:50-1). Chailley-Bert was followed by other writers such as Charles Régismanset, who colourfully attacked the humanitarian aspect of assimilation as ‘the pus which is discharged from the canker of practical reason’ (quoted in Betts, 1961:99). Jules Harmand also questioned the humanitarian myth arguing that all conquest is immoral and that domination could never be accepted by subject populations. Force as the basis for law inevitably led to an aristocratic form of government that was incompatible with democracy (Betts, 1961:101-4).

While the morality of colonialism was being debated, with the emphasis on the policy of assimilation, a series of administrators in Indochina were implementing new strategies to gain the support of local populations. Lanessan, Gallieni, Lyautey, Varenne and Sarraut, known as the ‘solutionists’, all gained their colonial experience in Indochina and contributed significantly to the debate (Knight, 1933:216-7).

Indochina became a social laboratory for this small group of men dedicated to implementing a new and vigorous colonial policy (Betts, 1961:119). Said (1993:170) argued that assimilation collapsed under the social Darwinist theories of superior and inferior races expressed by Le Bon, Seillère's philosophy of pure force, the systematics of colonial practice of Sarraut's and Leroy-Beaulieu's, and Harmand's principle of domination.

The new policy that came out of this extended debate, 'association', provided for economic development to be undertaken by an indigenous elite in association with Frenchmen, within the general framework of indigenous institutions. It was to be underpinned by tolerance, respect for indigenous religion, customs and laws, cooperation and assistance (Betts, 1961:120-1). Association was more suitable to a decentralised form of government, important following the introduction of a finance law of 1900 that stopped direct aid from the *metropole* to the colonies (Betts, 1961:4). Chailley-Bert argued that association was much more closely related to the whole idea of a protectorate (Betts, 1961:127), a much preferred concept in the context of growing liberalism in Europe, and particularly France (Brunschwig, 1964:117). Association was supported by the Colonial Congress of 1904, which declared that the 'fusion of interests through economic development' was the best way of improving the conditions of subject people. The Congress resolved that colonial governments needed to concentrate on economic development that would ensure the well-being of the French colonists as well as colonial populations (Betts, 1961:142).

The French believed that they had to improve the standard of living of the indigenous poor through what they called *mise en valeur*, translated by Aldrich (1996:172) as 'the wholesale development of the natural and human resources of the colonies'.

In a report to the Congress of 1904, Albert de Pouvourville argued that as *indigènes* were the only source of manpower, that they must be made to understand the importance of work and that work was not only a right but an obligation. Georges Valmor agreed that it was important to encourage native labour, and the need for public works meant that even forced labour was permissible in remote parts (Betts, 1961:142-3). General Pennequin, the commander-in-chief of the army in Indochina agreed, but in relation to the defence of Indochina against growing regional threats.

He saw the necessity of a ‘native’ army, but to enlist indigenous troops required a sense of cooperation still lacking in 1912.

[W]hat is needed is a real policy of association; we must educate the Annamites and give them access to all positions. There must no longer be conquerors and conquered here, but all, Annamites and Frenchmen, must be part of the same empire (quoted in Betts, 1961:163).

This is a very different perspective from Pennequin’s opinion at the beginning of the century when he supported the establishment of Đà Lạt, which he saw as a potential base for an alliance between the French and ‘non-Annamites’ (Khmer and minority hill tribes) against the hegemony of the Vietnamese (Jennings, 2003:164).

The ambiguities and contradictions within the colonial enterprise were expressed in many ways, and the adoption of a policy of association changed very little. The development of colonial economies, the education of indigenous subjects, employment conditions, urban planning and the provision of representative government, for example, never reached the standards within the colonies that were enjoyed within the *metropole*. Of particular consequence to the current study are the changes to colonial urban planning policy that came out of the *metropole* between 1890 and 1930.

Saigon was the first colonial administrative capital in Indochina. X. Guillaume (1985:181) has argued that Saigon ‘is a microcosm of the political, economic and social history of Vietnam, and a reflection of the diverging interests of France and its colony’. The military requirement to control the indigenous resistance to French conquest in the nineteenth century, combined with the policy of assimilation, underpinned urban planning for Saigon in the late nineteenth century with large open streets that allowed surveillance, but a lack of large open spaces that might encourage crowds gathering. Ostentatious buildings that symbolised French greatness were constructed, many totally inappropriate for the climate. Large areas of the city were razed and rebuilt because of a French dislike of any indigenous motifs in architecture.

The rebuilding that took place after the destruction of Saigon was therefore intended to assert a domineering and inviolable image of the imperial nation... Saigon became a symbol of French prestige and cultural hegemony’ (Cooper, 2001:44-5).

Much the same happened after the colonial capital moved to Hanoi under Governor-General Doumer at the turn of the century. Grand buildings that symbolised the greatness of France were constructed, but little was achieved that improved the lives of the majority of indigenous people in Hanoi. These structures that ‘related so conspicuously to the reality of a central government making all decisions, without participation of other groups, or even much consideration of their actual needs and preferences’ increasingly attracted criticism from home as Indochina remained a significant drain on the *metropole*, while contributing little (Wright, 1991:201).

Association became official policy after the WWI (Betts, 1961:165). Wright (1991) noted that implementation of the policy had a strong basis in architecture and urban planning. But this long anticipated development was foreseen by Albert Sarraut who introduced the policy of association to Indochina during his terms as Governor-General (1911-14, 1917-19). As a symbol of the new French attitude of respect for the indigenous culture, Sarraut commissioned a new building for the *Comât*, the Secret Council that advised the emperor. Under Doumer, the *Comât* had been emasculated by giving every Vietnamese member a French counterpart. Because of its increased size Sarraut commissioned the first public building built by the French that incorporated Vietnamese elements of style. This building, constructed in Hué in 1913, imitated the original *Comât* building to emphasise the continuity with the traditional system of government (Wright, 1991:188). In practice the *Comât* had no influence. Similar architectural principles were employed in new provincial Chamber of Representatives buildings. Similarly, these were powerless institutions and seldom attracted respected community representatives (Wright, 1991:199).

When Maurice Long was appointed Governor-General in 1920, he recognised the shift in policy and applied for funds to employ a professional ‘urbanist’ to begin, for the first time, long term planning for the re-development of Indochina’s cities, along regionalist lines (Wright, 1991:201). Ernest Hébrard arrived in Indochina in 1921, following a period directing the reconstruction of Thessalonika (Greece) after its destruction during WWI. He was the first experienced urban planner to work in Indochina and was trained in the Beaux Arts style, which stressed symmetry, grand axes, formal plantings and designed public spaces. He introduced a new perspective to colonial architecture in Indochina (Chapman, 2002:42) and argued that ‘indigenous

construction always harmonizes with the environment ... it becomes part of the landscape' (quoted in Wright, 1991:203-4). Hébrard designed several major buildings in Hanoi incorporating principles from indigenous architecture including orientation, site planning, ventilation systems, and the use of verandahs, overhanging eaves, and the use of thin walls appropriate for the tropical climate (Wright, 1991:204). One of Hébrard's best known buildings in Hanoi is nowadays the National History Museum. It was constructed as the Louis Finot Museum for the *Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* (EFEO), and incorporated design elements from different regions and even different Asian countries, to generate his 'ideal of an innovative, adaptive aesthetic... Hébrard's aesthetic made even the design of the museum a statement of cultural dominance' (Wright, 1991:207,209). So by the mid to late 1920s it seems that in urban architecture, as in social, economic and political life generally in Indochina, association was never about changing the nature of French domination. '[S]ubjection, assimilation, and association are not different policies in any practical sense, but rather elements or factors in policy' (Knight, 1933:208).

A conference on urbanism in the colonies in 1931 sought to institutionalise new urban planning ideas that had been developed under Lyautey's direction in Morocco. Lyautey was one of those 'solutionists' who had developed and tested some of his ideas about association in Indochina. The outcomes of the conference resulted in:

the mandatory institution of *plans d'aménagement et d'extension* for all agglomerations, requiring that these plans be approved by those competent to do so, that the designs respect the practices of the 'races' involved but not exclude contact between them, that the cities be airy and well planted, that architectural pastiche be avoided, that local arts be used as much as possible in ornamenting these cities, that modern arts be used for modern necessities, that hygiene be the norm in all dimensions of the plan, that historical monuments be preserved, and that aerial photography be used in planning (Rabinow, 1989:319).

With the establishment of the pro-Vichy government under Governor-General Decoux in 1941, the colonial administration made a retrogressive shift to the 'right' and values of the nineteenth century. Under Decoux, association was largely abandoned and instead a new policy of federalism and cooperation was introduced that recognised the differences between the various cultures that made up the federation of Indochina. This was not association, but a third way between



assimilation and association, a new framework for imperialism. As Jennings (2001:174) described it:

Decoux's federalism would indeed be ordered, but also hierarchical, explicitly antidemocratic, and inegalitarian [*sic*]. It would, above all, designate an abstract union of various Indochinese identities under the protective and fundamentally antiassimilationist [*sic*] umbrella of Vichy France.

Federalism suggests an alliance among equals, but for Decoux it symbolised a return to royalist themes. Federalism encouraged the Indochinese to demonstrate their close ties to their village, commune and *pays*. By promoting the glorious past of the individual *pays*, in contrast to their modern decline into decadence, federalism distinguished the Indochinese from the Japanese outsiders and their claims of Asia for the Asians. But federalism at the same time segregated the Indochinese *pays* from each other. The French role in the Indochinese Union was as the cement that bonded the five *pays* together. Under federalism Decoux established a series of new representative bodies, after abolishing all elected bodies in November 1940, that were fundamentally hierarchical, antidemocratic and powerless. The purpose of federalism under Decoux was to divide and conquer the Indochinese, and to segregate them from the Japanese (Jennings, 2001:174-7, 180-1).

### **3-3-1 Đà Lạt, the principal hill station in Indochina was a model for the other regional hill stations**

Hébrard's main passion was urban planning on a broad scale, and it was his planning for Đà Lạt, the premier hill station in Indochina, proposed for the second time as an administrative capital in the 1920s, that is of most relevance in the current discussion. In 1921, soon after his arrival in Indochina, Hébrard was given the brief to work on the plans for Đà Lạt by Governor-General Long who wanted to revive the idea of establishing Đà Lạt as the administrative capital (Wright, 1991:332). It was in Đà Lạt that Hébrard could develop his idea of urban planning under the policy of association.

Dalat was to be a model city, in the sense of a controlled environment, an urbane retreat for the French elite ... This city would supposedly inspire governmental efficiency, high-minded leisure, and health of body and mind through its site and design – at least for European residents (Wright, 1991:230).

Incorporating a military post and potentially the administrative capital, Hébrard's vision was to downplay commercial and industrial matters that he saw dominating the city scapes of Saigon, Hanoi and Hải Phòng (Cooper, 2001:147; Wright, 1991:230).

Zoning was central to Hébrard's urban planning, and was central to controlling development and 'inscribing order on the landscape' (Cooper, 2001:147). Zones were allocated for administration, residential, recreation, commerce and industry.

European residential areas were strictly segregated and most Vietnamese needed permission to enter the city (Wright, 1997:230). In 1922, even before Hébrard had produced a plan, a law passed in Saigon made it clear that in a large section of Đà Lạt only European houses could be built. Part of Hébrard's concern with segregation stems from a French 'obsession with health and hygiene' (Cooper, 2001:149). The Vietnamese were considered a potential source of disease. Hébrard's design 'spared the Europeans of any evidence of poverty or industry' (Wright, 1997:232)

Đà Lạt was intended as an inherently French space, but the highland environment also provided a cool setting for those interested in hunting, or those with an interest in anthropology who could visit local ethnic minority villages. The city was laid out around an artificial lake and the opulent Lang Bian Palace Hotel which overlooked the lake. The Palace Hotel was the first major construction, built in the rococo style of hotels on the French Riviera, completed in 1922 before Đà Lạt was connected by road or railway, or any administrative buildings (Jennings, 2003:169). The Hotel:

encapsulates the delusions of grandeur of French colonial administrators, planners and architects for whom aesthetic and power considerations systematically superseded practical ones (Jennings, 2003:185).

As a consequence Đà Lạt and the Palace Hotel remained a significant drain on the budget of Annam, while the new development served the well-off *colons* and bureaucrats in Saigon. By 1928, the Résident Supérieur d'Annam was withdrawing protectorate funding, and as the export price of rubber collapsed in anticipation of the economic crisis of 1929, the financial base for the Palace Hotel and further development in Đà Lạt was weakened (Jennings, 2003:183).

Although there was some villa construction during the 1920s, Đà Lạt's development was limited by difficult access. Road and rail links were not completed until between 1930 and 1933 (Jennings, 2003:185; Robequain, 1944:61, 93-4). Robequain (1944:61) noted the serious risks of disease for workers constructing Colonial Route 20 to Đà Lạt across the Blao Pass from Saigon. This made it very difficult to keep workers after the experience of the construction of the Yunnan-Fu Railway in 1904-5,

when 25,000 workers quickly succumbed to malarial infections and died (Wright, 1991:182), and in 1922 when 900 convict and coolie labourers died during the construction of the access road to Bokor Hill Station in Cambodia (Chandler, 1996:146). During the construction of Colonial Route 20, on the advice of the Pasteur Institute, campsites were carefully selected, dangerous pools of water were covered with oil, and all workers given quinine, with the consequence that '150 kilometers of roadway were built in less than two years, with an average mortality rate which never again exceeded eight per cent' (Robequain, 1944:61).

It seems likely that Hébrard never visited the Lang Bian Plateau during the planning of Đà Lạt. His plans were too grandiose and unpopular with the *colon* community, and were never implemented, apart from a promenade around the lake and a few small villas (Wright, 1997:232). He returned to France *circa* 1929 and in 1932 Louis Georges Pineau was commissioned to adapt Hébrard's plan on a more modest scale (Wright, 1997:364, note 119). As a consequence of the depression, use of the resort and further development was limited until well into the 1930s. Emperor Bảo Đại built a summer palace in 1934 and the Governor-General's summer place was completed in 1937 (Jennings, 2003:172). But as villa construction began again in the late 1930s there was a shift to nostalgia for the French countryside, so that houses were built that resembled cottages in Savoie, Provence and Alsace, creating a 'fairy-tale evocation of peaceful French provincial life' rather than the complex, urbane, cultural milieu envisioned by Hébrard (Wright, 1997:232-3).

One of the problems faced by the Palace Hotel, that saw its closure from 1934-37 as a cost saving measure, was that it was catering for the elite of Saigon when these were the people who could afford to go home to France for holidays, particularly after *Air France* established regular weekly flights between the *metropole* and Indochina in 1931 (Robequain, 1944:126). Some of these people also built their own villas in Đà Lạt (Jennings, 2003:180). The Palace Hotel, therefore, depended for its clientele on middle ranking administrators, few of whom could afford its luxurious prices.

By the time that Hébrard had left Indochina urban planning was expressing the new ideas of the Modern Internationalist movement that had little interest in local cultural tradition or regionality, but adopted 'universalist principles'. In 1940-41 Decoux was

keen to show that Indochina was keeping pace with European trends. He presented a new master plan for Hanoi in 1942, and a new plan for the proposed federal capital in Đà Lạt in 1943 that incorporated the new ideas in urban planning and created a sharp break with the Hébrard line (Logan, 1994:56-7).

### **3-4 Summary**

Chapter 1 introduced OBM as a symbol of colonialism in Central Vietnam during the late 1930s and early 1940s. The brief review of theories of imperialism in this chapter concluded that the most appropriate approach to an examination of colonialism in Central Vietnam is through intercultural social relationships. The characteristics of collaboration and resistance between coloniser and colonised described by Robinson as a fundamental aspect of colonialism, are recognisable in the historical social relations between the French and Vietnamese. Social interaction is more appropriate than an examination of the expansion of colonial capitalism in Annam because of the general lack of economic development in Central Vietnam under the French. The Protectorate of Annam was important to the French colonial venture in Indochina because of its strategic significance which was partly geographical and partly because Hué was the centre of the Imperial Vietnamese administrative framework. Perhaps more than in Cochinchina and Tonkin, because of the focus of economic development in the north and the south, it was more important for the French to develop collaborative relationships with the mandarins in Hué in order to maintain stability in the administrative structure more widely.

Colonialism under the Third Republic had initially been justified as a mission to civilise underdeveloped nations by incorporating them in the empire and inculcating French culture into the indigenous populations, while at the same time exploiting their natural and human resources for the benefit of French industry and commerce. Indochina became a social laboratory in which new ideas of social Darwinian thought were applied by French administrators to explore the most appropriate approach to intercultural social interaction between the colonisers and colonised. French economic policy continued to integrate the Indochinese economy into that of the *metropole*, while there was a growing acceptance of cultural differences and of the failure of assimilation to impose French civilisation. As the character of collaboration shifted from assimilation to association, the nature of cultural relations remained one

of cultural segregation, a condition that continued under the new federalism of Decoux. It seems that each policy was distinguished by the character of the architecture and urban planning rather than any real change in the living standards of the Indochinese people.

French imperialists introduced the policy of association at a time of increasing social dissent with the intention to increase the incorporation of the Vietnamese elite into colonial economic development within an Indochinese institutional framework. Wright (1991) highlighted the significance of the role that architecture and urban planning played in the expression of French colonial policy. The recognition and respect for indigenous culture suggested by the policy of association, was expressed in architecture and urban planning rather than any meaningful political or economic autonomy. The planning of Đà Lạt offers a pertinent example as it went through three main phases of planning and development, in each of which it was proposed as a federal administrative capital, that coincided with the three phases of colonial policy development. Each planning stage indicated that the French had still not come to terms with their mission to civilise because at each stage, Đà Lạt sought to isolate the French colonisers, geographically and symbolically, from the Indochinese people. Đà Lạt and French colonial policy on intercultural social relations, undoubtedly had a significant influence on the planning and development of OBM and the other hill stations of Indochina. Chapter 4 will review archaeological studies of colonialism that address issues of status and of collaboration and resistance between coloniser and colonised, and that focus on colonial architecture.

## **Chapter 4      Archaeological concepts of colonialism**

### **4-1 Introduction**

This chapter develops the archaeological concepts which will be used to analyse OBM. Chapter 3 argued that exploring relationships between the French and Vietnamese communities in OBM is likely to be a rewarding approach to an understanding of French colonialism in Central Vietnam in the 1940s. The archaeological concepts appropriate for this approach include issues of social status and intercultural social relationships. Social status, and relationships such as collaboration and resistance between coloniser and colonised, as they are expressed through material culture and represented in spatial organisation, are common themes in historical archaeology (Delle, 1998; McGuire & Paynter, 1991; Paynter & McGuire, 1991). This chapter will focus on the archaeological theory and method that can be adapted to the environment of OBM.

Colonial sites have attracted considerable interest in Western, developed, former colonial countries, particularly in the Americas, but also in Australia and New Zealand. A range of methodologies derived from landscape, spatial archaeology and historical archaeology have been used. Recent studies have focused on colonial architecture and associated material culture to examine issues of identity, resistance to colonial domination and the transfer of cultural characteristics between the colonisers and colonised (Ashmore & Knapp, 1999; Burke, 1999; Delle, 1999b; Jamieson, 2005; Kealhofer, 1999; Knapp & Ashmore, 1999; Leone, 1984). These studies highlight the ways that colonial elites manipulated the landscape, not only as symbols of their dominance, but also as part of the process of creating and maintaining an environment of privilege and inequality. At the same time the material culture of indigenous elites and non-elites can reveal elements of collaboration and resistance to the colonial power that may be excluded in the historical record (Paynter & McGuire, 1991). Such studies provide the model on which the study of OBM is developed while recognising that the archaeological characteristics of OBM present their own challenges.

Archaeology has a long and distinguished history in both colonial and postcolonial Vietnam, but has not yet addressed recent colonial issues. Chapter 4 begins with a

review of Vietnamese archaeology. The discussion then provides an overview of landscape and spatial archaeology before reviewing relevant studies in colonial archaeology. Of particular value are studies of some plantation sites in North America and the Caribbean because their landscape and social organisation resonate with the hill stations of Indochina. A review of several studies that focus on domestic architecture in a colonial setting then follows. The study of ceramic artefacts to explore aspects of cultural identity and cultural interaction, particularly in a colonial context, is also reviewed briefly. Finally, the chapter reviews taphonomy, the process of site formation, with a particular focus on issues related to site formation associated with natural disasters.

#### **4-2 Vietnamese colonial archaeology, there isn't one**

The French introduced archaeology to Vietnam during the nineteenth century. The re-discovery of the monuments of Cambodia by Henri Mouhot in 1860 (Glover, 2006:25) and similar finds in Central Vietnam, particularly the exploration of ancient Cham sites of which the most spectacular are at Mỹ Sơn in Quảng Nam Province just south of the current study area, provided impetus for further archaeology. Vietnam's archaeological record attests to 4000 years of civilisation. For more than a millennium (111BC – AD938) the Red River Delta was occupied and dominated by the Chinese, a period during which the people absorbed aspects of Chinese culture reflected in modern Vietnam's language, religion, politics, social and family relationships (Higham, 2002). China's proximity has ensured its ongoing influence. It has represented a direct threat to Vietnam's sovereignty on several occasions in the last one thousand years. The period of French colonisation and the Second Indochina War has accentuated the value Vietnamese people place on their independence. Archaeological research in Vietnam has focused on periods when the country was independent.

Archaeology has been used to demonstrate the material basis of the nation's cultural independence (Glover, 2006:25-7; Thòng, 1990; Xiaorong Han, 2004). Even these studies, however, may be constrained. Glover (2006:27) suggested that recent interest in Cham culture in Central Vietnam, could encourage a 'resurgence of a local national identity [which probably] would not be welcomed in Hanoi'. Interest in the heritage of colonial buildings is often in response to the tourist industry's focus on the past,

and a need to conserve or reconstruct an aspect of local history recognised and appreciated by visitors more than the local population (Logan, 2005a; Long, 2003). There appears to be little local archaeological interest in the French colonial era (HỒ, 2004), although local archaeologists are familiar with its characteristics. In Huế, for example, local archaeologists regularly excavate through French era strata to reveal the Nguyễn relics beneath (pers. comm. Phan Thanh Hải). There is also little interest from the former colonial rulers in the study of colonial sites. In France there is uncertainty about the morality of the colonial years (Rayner, 2008) and little French interest in an archaeological exploration of colonialism in former colonies. It is possible that, as local Vietnamese interest develops in exploring the influences of French culture on modern Vietnamese culture, so too will archaeological interest in the colonial period.

### **4-3 *Landscape and spatial archaeology***

Landscape archaeology involves a broader perspective of past cultural traditions beyond individual sites. It involves the interpretation of sites within the landscape in which they exist, recognising that the landscape itself is something shaped by people as much as it influences the activities of the people within it. Knapp and Ashmore (1999:15) noted that ‘landscape provides a focus by which people engage with the world and create and sustain a sense of their social identity’. An archaeological interpretation of the landscape in which sites exist is a first step towards placing them in their wider context. There are two main elements in landscape archaeology in the English tradition. Firstly there is an approach that considers that ‘landscape’ is what lies beyond the immediate site, or excavation, and places a specific location in a broader environmental context. This is particularly useful, for example, in the consideration of the economic foundation (agriculture, subsistence) of an individual settlement or occupation site. The second element views landscape as a way of seeing, a way of thinking about the physical world (Johnson, 2007:4). The modern practices and techniques of landscape archaeology have their foundation in the Renaissance and the Romantic view of landscape in art and literature. Johnson (2007:16) suggested that ‘perhaps the most central element to all these practices was the map’. A map of OBM, dating from about 1943, has been central to this study of the hill station and provides a coherent overview of the landscape of OBM. It is discussed in Chapter 6-4.



Spatial analysis has been a major theme in archaeological studies since the late nineteenth century. David Clarke's (1977) edited volume *Spatial Archaeology* attests to the long established foundations on which this form of archaeological analysis is based. This volume described a range of methodologies used in various contexts that range from intra-site to inter-site studies. One of the papers, Dickens (1977), proved to be of particular value to the interpretation of OBM. This paper documented a process for presenting house-plans graphically to identify elements of house layout that might be specific to particular time periods. Dickens's format was adapted in this study to represent room layouts in OBM structures and is further described in Chapter 5-8 and Chapter 8-2.

In the same volume, Fletcher (1977:111) documented the use of a combination of archaeological, ethnographic and social anthropological data to describe locational behaviour. Fletcher studied size and position of structures in a seventeenth century Franciscan mission established adjacent to a Hopi pueblo in Arizona. The site developed through a series of abandonments, reoccupations and adaptations, over a period of seventy or eighty years. Fletcher analysed building facades, areas, room size and door widths concluding that over the period of occupation and adaptation of the mission neither the Hopi nor missionaries adopted significant elements of the other's culture, but rather they maintained their own adaptive responses to the environment. Also in the same volume, Raper (1977:206) explored the distribution of activities in Pompeii and suggested that spatial variation in social activities indicated a society moving from imperialism to democracy and open competition, in which the merchant class was emulating the gentry. The studies of Fletcher and Raper show two aspects of cultural adaptation. In Pompeii, in the context of a developing democracy, the merchant class was challenging the gentry's dominance by adopting elite cultural traits. Raper argued that the competition between the classes was expressed in the material culture. In contrast, Fletcher's study suggested that there was little adoption of colonial traits among the Hopi when they reoccupied the abandoned monastery, because colonial culture offered no advantage to the Hopi who maintained their pursuit of traditional activities. The adoption of cultural traits, or acculturation, in the context of colonial studies, is further discussed in the following section.

In a more recent study, Mudar (1999) used locational analysis in a study of moated settlements on the plain of central Thailand dating from the first centuries A.D. She considered settlement size, rank-size distribution and geographical position of sixty-three moated sites identified using aerial photography. Mudar argued that Dvaravati site distribution suggested socio-political and economic integration of the region at a time of increasing contact and trade with neighbouring regions, in particular the Funan polity based in the Mekong Delta. She also noted the similarity between the Dvaravati and Funan in size, a shared system of writing, language, beliefs and political institutions, arguing for the value of peer polity types of inter-regional studies that have been developed in the Mediterranean (Renfrew & Wagstaff, 1982). These few examples suggest the potential for archaeological studies that consider sites within their landscape, as well as spatial organisation both within sites and in landscapes.

#### **4-4 Archaeological studies of colonialism**

Archaeology is the study of material culture in order to recognise patterns that shed light on human behaviour. In this study the focus is on the architectural remnants and associated material culture remains of an urban development, OBM, in order to reveal information on social relations in a colonial environment. The study of the relationship between material culture, and in particular domestic architecture, has been a common theme in anthropological and social history studies since the 1920s. In the late 1950s and 1960s Edward Hall highlighted the point that the ‘spatial relationship between individuals structured social relationships’, and that architecture and material culture were important spatial elements in the shaping of these relationships (Jamieson, 2000:9-11). Hall coined the term ‘proxemics’ to describe what he saw as ‘man’s use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture’ (Hall, 1966:1).

James Deetz introduced these ideas into archaeology in the 1960s in his studies of North American colonial sites, and these themes were expanded on by Clifford Geertz (Jamieson, 2000:12). Geertz argued that meanings in objects are historically derived (Jamieson, 2000:13). The anthropological theory of structuralism that underpins the work of Deetz and Geertz aims to explain ‘cultural behaviour as a result of shared

group unconscious' in which cultural objects are invested in meaning by a culture. However, structuralism was criticised for failing to recognise that objects may have multiple meanings and may have different meanings to different individuals. In recent years there has been a wide recognition that material culture objects need to be studied in the context of their time and place and Jamieson (2000:13) noted that anthropologists such as Michael Parker Pearson and Colin Richards advocated that 'architecture must be studied with reference to the historical and social context it was built and used in'.

Much of this work has also been influenced by the writing of Henri Lefebvre, a Marxian theorist of space who, in the 1960s and 1970s, developed his ideas of 'differential space'. He argued that not only are there different perspectives of space, but that space is constantly changing, flowing, 'organic and alive' and is actively produced (Merrifield, 2006:105). In *The Production of Space* (1991) his objective was 'a rapprochement between *physical* space (nature), *mental* space (formal abstractions of space), and *social* space (the space of human interaction)' (Merrifield, 2006:104). Lefebvre (1991:88) argued that:

All these spaces, are traversed by myriad currents. The hyper-complexity of space should now be apparent, embracing as it does individual entities and particularities, relatively fixed points, movements, and flows and waves – some interpenetrating, others in conflict

These different interpretations of space are superimposed on one another, incorporated into the built landscapes of urbanity, 'literally piled on top of each other, intersecting and buried, palpable and distorted within three-dimensional 'objective' forms that speak a flattened, one-dimensional truth' (Merrifield, 2006:105). Lefebvre (1991:113) argued that it is never easy getting back 'from the object to the activity that produced and/or created it'.

Anthony Giddens (1979:1) developed structuration theory to address some of the criticisms of structuralism in his work on social systems. Structuration theory has a number of features that help provide that conceptual framework necessary for the study of OBM. Giddens emphasised that time and place are crucial to the analysis of social systems. Giddens (1984:xxii) also disputed the assumption that peoples'

actions are a result of a shared cultural unconscious, a theme emanating from the earlier theory of structuralism. Rather than reacting to unconscious cultural reflexes people 'have, as an inherent aspect of what they do, the capacity to understand what they do while they are doing it'. He highlighted the importance of time and place by noting that not only are individuals 'positioned' relative to one another but so are the contexts of their social relationships. Giddens (1984:xxv) supported the techniques of time-geography and further elaborated that 'the interpretation of urbanism ... has a basic part to play in social theory'. Furthermore, Giddens (1984:127) highlighted the growth of surveillance in modern societies as part of the mechanism the elite use to maintain their social positions, an idea that is particularly resonant in colonial environments. He suggested that when people know they are being observed, they are likely to conform to the behaviour expected by the politically dominant group, thus maintaining social order and the existing social structure.

Acculturation, or the adoption of cultural traits by elements of either the colonising or colonised population has been studied in several Spanish colonial contexts. Such studies look at developments of archaeological traits over time, for example, use of household ceramics, where particular traits can be seen to gradually increase or decrease under the influence of colonial occupation. In a series of studies in the Caribbean, Kathleen Deagan and others (Deagan, 1983) found that among the eighteenth century Spanish colonial settlers in St Augustine (now in Florida, USA) adoption of cultural traits was associated with social status and gender. Wealthy elite households were less likely to adopt indigenous cultural traits, while they argued that women in less wealthy households, mediated the adoption of indigenous culture, for example through the use of local cooking vessels. Meanwhile in the 'highly visible (male) social contexts' Spanish made items tended to dominate (Van Buren, 1999:108-9). Deagan's focus was not on architecture at St Augustine, however, she mentioned the incorporation of Hispanic architectural traditions with local building materials and techniques incorporated in the structures in which the primary male activity areas were identified in St Augustine (Deagan, 1983:109). Charles Ewin found similar patterns of use in the Spanish colonial setting in Puerto Real, Haiti, a much wealthier setting occupied in the sixteenth century (Van Buren, 1999:115). However, in central South America, also under Spanish colonial rule, Van Buren found a different pattern. At Tarapaya, now in Bolivia, a highland hydrotherapy

settlement occupied by a wealthy Spanish entrepreneur, la Rocha, Van Buren found a much greater adoption of indigenous culture, and much less use of Spanish made items. This pattern was also reflected at Maquegua in Peru. Van Buren (1999:120) suggested that these variations reflect several historical and geographical factors, including that both Tarapaya and Maquegua were intermittently occupied. This suggests that Spanish colonists were willing to accept indigenous cultural traditions in temporary situations but were likely to introduce more Hispanic cultural elements during long-term residency.

#### **4-4-1 Plantation archaeology**

Colonial plantations share several features with hill stations. The development of plantation archaeology in the 1980s and 1990s has produced theory and methodology likely to be illuminating for an examination of hill stations. Plantations established communities in previously undeveloped rural areas, and therefore provided a *tabula rasa* for the establishment of new communities. Plantation communities exhibited extremely hierarchical social organisations that are readily distinguished in the archaeological record, and plantations introduced an industry and production process, generally restricted to a colonial economy and environment prior to WWII. The elite colonial element of a plantation community may be limited to a single household, or perhaps two or three families, while hill stations had a much larger elite community that incorporated its own complex social stratification. Both communities relied on a large workforce. Plantations used slaves to perform a range of duties that were also socially stratified, fieldworkers and labourers distinct from domestic workers. Hill stations employed local indigenous workforce that was likewise stratified, labourers and porters below domestic staff. In hill stations, the indigenous community was also represented among the elite.

Plantations were a fundamental part of colonial capitalism in the nineteenth century (Doyle, 1986:110). Plantations of rubber, sugar, coffee, tobacco, etc. were established in all the tropical Southeast Asian colonies as a secure source of raw materials for the industrialising economies of Europe. In the Americas and the Caribbean, the plantations were a major market for African slaves and as such, they have figured in academic studies of slavery, especially in the context of emerging capitalism in the New World (Butler, 1995; Mintz & Hall, 1960). They have also attracted

archaeological interest as a material expression of the social organisation of capitalism. In Indochina, rubber plantations in particular were of major significance to an emerging export economy, the second most important agricultural export after rice, but perhaps the most popular amongst French capitalists at home (Brocheux, 2000:254). Slavery was not a feature of plantations in Indochina, although a significantly hierarchical social organisation was characteristic of all colonial environments. To date, there has been no significant study of the material expression of social organisation in Indochinese plantations or of any colonial sites in Vietnam, however, archaeological principles have been established in a series of plantation studies in the US and the Caribbean.

Plantation archaeology incorporates techniques from historical and landscape archaeology; it often works with archaeological evidence visible on the ground surface or exposed to the surface from time to time, and often associated with documentary sources that allow aspects of the material remains of the social organisation to be associated with significant events (Delle, 1999a). In North America and the Caribbean, for example, plantation operations spanned one of the most significant developments in capitalism in the nineteenth century, the abolition of slavery by Britain in 1834, and by the US following the end of the American Civil War in 1865. Studies by Orser and Delle (Delle, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Orser, 1988) analysed the social organisation of plantations within a classical Marxist framework. They examined how changes in the functioning of capitalism that affected social organisation were expressed in the material culture of social relationships, and that the ownership of the means of production is a source of power. How social stratification in plantations was expressed materially that is most relevant to the study of hill stations.

Orser (1988:323-4) described the social organisation in an antebellum (pre-American Civil War) cotton plantation, Millwood, in Southern Carolina in the US. The strictly hierarchical plantation community was made up of a group of free Europeans that was headed by the planter who owned the land, the plantation infrastructure and the enslaved workforce. The free European community also included overseers and tradesmen. The enslaved African workforce included field workers and house workers (domestic staff). Antebellum Millwood as described in historical documents

exhibited a clustered settlement pattern with the planter's house at the centre of the estate among a group of support buildings, such as servants' quarters, carriage houses, smokehouses and sheds. Upton (discussed in Delle, 1999b:139) also commented that the planter's house was often built on a hill overlooking the plantation and surrounded by a series of terraces and fences to further distinguish it within the associated settlement. A separate cluster or clusters of buildings was organised around an overseer's house and included the slaves' quarters, the slave hospital and nursery. The spatial organisation of the plantation placed the field slaves near the fields and the house slaves near the house. The clustered pattern allowed the overseers and planter to maintain surveillance over the slaves at all times.

Orser (1988:324) described an experimental system of land tenure introduced at Millwood immediately after the Civil War and the emancipation of the plantation workforce. In what was called a 'squad system', the emancipated workforce continued to live in clusters of buildings that were based mainly around family members. But the clusters were now at a distance from the planter and overseer's house so that the workforce was no longer under constant surveillance. As the new capitalist system evolved in an environment of emancipation, a tenancy system was introduced in which small scale farmers rented and worked small parcels of the plantation. Under this system tenant farmers gradually moved into accommodation close to their own fields that resulted in a scattered occupancy across the landscape. Orser (1988:328) identified three different settlement patterns represented at Millwood in building foundations that were exposed by erosion across the plantation site in the early 1980s. He found house size was related to status in the post-bellum system, the planter's house being the largest, followed by the overseers' houses, then the millwright's and the tenants', with the wage hands occupying the smallest houses. Delle (1999b:148) developed Orser's approach by suggesting a clear link existed between the 'dynamics of class negotiation' and the material culture of plantations. Delle studied the surviving structures at a coffee plantation, Clydesdale, in the Yallahs River region in eastern Jamaica. He described the overseer's house at Clydesdale as a two storey building with a verandah that overlooked the coffee processing works, so that the overseer could supervise the work from the comfort and security of his own home. The overseer's house had cut-stone walls two feet (600mm) thick that Delle argued created a significant barrier, both physical and symbolic, between the overseer

and his family, and the slaves. Delle argued that an active part of social control at the Yallahs plantation was that the enslaved workers had to create the plantation landscapes themselves. The power of the planter, the owner of the means of production, was expressed in the 'landscapes of control' that maximised coffee production and social control through surveillance and observation. Delle argued that this type of social control worked equally through the direct observation of the overseer and/or planter, and on creating the perception that the workforce was under constant surveillance. The intention was to create in the workforce an internalised discipline in that the workers were more likely to cooperate if they thought they were under constant observation.

Thomas's (1998) study of an antebellum cotton plantation, the Hermitage, the residence of former US President Andrew Jackson before his death in 1845, raised a valuable point about social hierarchy in the slave community. Thomas identified among the planters, a perception of social hierarchy within their slave communities. This placed house slaves and some skilled slaves at the top, and field slaves at the bottom, and the planters related this with class distinction. Within the slave community, however, this house/field dichotomy was rejected because many people were valued for particular skills or personal characteristics beyond their roles in the plantation workforce. Thomas argued that the social hierarchy recognised by the planter was expressed in the location of the accommodation provided by the planter. At the Hermitage the house slaves had cabins in the backyard of the planter's house. A second cluster of houses was located about 165 metres north of the house, and a third cluster, to house the field slaves, was located 530 metres north of the house. This spatial segregation of the different 'classes' reinforced the planters perception of class. Thomas noted that the housing provided by the planter, however, was standardised across the plantation, exhibiting identical floor plans for equivalent structures. He argued that this standardisation of structures, and the spatial segregation of classes, imposed additional order and control on the plantation landscape.

Delle (1999a) presented another study of the sixteenth-century, English colonial expansion into the Irish province of Munster, called the Munster Plantation. In this case 'plantation' referred to Irish land confiscated from Irish rebels that was



subsequently granted to a group of New English adventurers and Old English loyal vassals who were consequently transplanted into the Irish landscape. In this study, Delle examined the negotiation of power through social interaction including domination, resistance and collusion, represented in the manipulation of material culture, in this case architecture. As part of the process of colonisation, the English imposed, as well as English settlers, English ideas about spatial organisation in relation to agricultural field arrangements, town planning and house forms. Delle discussed the house design adopted by one of the reluctant Irish lords, McCarthy, who had entered an uneasy collusion with the English. McCarthy built a house that resembled English houses in its plan and elevation that demonstrated his allegiance, but which retained elements of the traditional tower houses of the locality. Delle (Delle, 1999a:27) argued that the Irish chiefs who reluctantly collaborated with the English resisted the imposition of English spatial order into the Irish landscape through their maintenance of traditional 'spatial grammars' in their house designs. For these Irish lords there was an effort to find a balance between collaboration and resistance towards the coloniser that would maintain their own position of power within the community.

Delle (1999a:15-20) considered space as a material tool that can be manipulated. Delle's main proposition was that the organisational logics of spatial features, house forms, field arrangements, town plans, are intricately and inherently related to the construction and maintenance of unequal relations of production, or the creation and maintenance of inequity in the capitalist social structure. By imposing their own idealised spatial hierarchies the English in Munster were forcing a redefinition among the colonised Irish of their cognitive landscapes, that internalised experience or symbolic representation of landscape, Lefebvre's 'mental' space. Delle (1998:3, 14) argued that in periods of crisis and restructuring, capitalist elites increase their attempts to reorganise the spaces of production to reorganise the relations of production in order to secure and maintain their socio-economic dominance. Elites create a system of spatial inequality that supports the maintenance of social inequality. Material landscapes both shape and reflect social relations so that landscape becomes a tool that elites use in their manipulation of social relationships.

It is these aspects of plantations in the Americas, the mechanisms used by the elite to institute and maintain social differentiation through their use of space and architecture, that is relevant to the hill stations of Asia. Furthermore, the influence of crises and outside pressure on the material expression of power resonates so well with Indochina in the first half of the twentieth century.

#### **4-4-2 Archaeological studies of colonial architecture**

Jamieson (2000) studied domestic architecture in a colonial setting in Ecuador in which he argued that domestic architecture provides evidence of the relations between different groups. He studied five domestic houses still with colonial architectural features, such as doors, pedestals, patios etc. He also used a technique of ‘permeability flows’ to identify basic properties of symmetry and asymmetry, ‘distributedness or nondistributedness’, which he used in a historical context (Jamieson, 2000:61-2). He identified developments in architecture from the eighteenth to nineteenth century in which a growing compartmentalisation was represented in the use of space, as rooms were added for specific functions such as sleeping, eating and so on. These developments were interpreted as reflecting the growing importance of the individual in European culture. Whereas earlier structures of two or three rooms, one room deep, could not allow for a hierarchy of space, later buildings of the elite included internal patios that provided complete privacy from the outside world, and upper floors that were inherently more private. The houses of the non-elites were more open suggesting the element of surveillance which, Jamieson argued, was an essential part of the development of the capitalist world, and especially in colonised environments (Jamieson, 2000:125-6).

Mann and Loren (2001) studied a French colonial site, Azilum, in the northeast of the US. Elite French refugees escaping from the French Revolution established a community that survived less than twenty years (1793 – 1809). A number of former military officers, clergy, aristocrats, and planters and merchants from Saint-Domingue, planned a substantial township based on French neoclassical themes, consisting of 418 lots arranged around a central market place. Mann and Loren (2001;284-6) argued that the colonists used architecture, furniture and dress to publicly distinguish themselves as elites from the largely English colonial population, and to re-establish the pre-revolutionary social order of France in Azilum. They used

stone and marble to build Georgian and Neoclassical style mansions with elaborate gardens to recreate pre-revolutionary social relations and to project their view of social order to non-elites.

Burke (1999) looked at a nineteenth century Australian town, Armidale, to explore ideology in a capitalist context, to look at how the tensions between classes and subgroups within broad social categories, such as workers and owners, were expressed materially in their houses. Her thesis grew out of an interest in Mark Leone's study of William Paca's garden, in which Paca's high social status was reflected in his garden. Burke (1999:4) noted that 'the monumental scale, position and structure of Paca's garden was also designed to structure the world of the workers in such a way as to reinforce their perception of subordination'. She wanted to see 'how the use of material artefacts to incorporate a ruling group might also be used to reinforce a perception of subordination in others' and also how the appropriation of these status artefacts by the ruled could break down the symbolism of subordination. Armidale was established in regional New South Wales in the mid-nineteenth century, in an environment that had not been previously developed and grew to be a prosperous agricultural centre. She analysed houses built by people whose social position in the local community was known from the local history, and selected aspects of 'archaeological style as a particular field of material artifacts which may have marked different patterns of social identity' (Burke, 1999:4). Her definition of style was taken from that of Polly Weissner who argued that style is a means of identifying personal status in comparison to others (Burke, 1999:7). Burke argued that this is one of the great strengths of archaeology, that it is possible to understand 'the material character of the construction of a social order' (Burke, 1999:217). By studying the local buildings associated with people whose social position was known, by comparing elements of the structures such as the size, shape, materials they were made from and their position, she argued that it is possible to identify individuals and groups who create identities for themselves and relate them to other individuals and groups that structure the world (Burke, 1999:219).

It is in the tradition of these colonial studies that the present study examines the material culture of OBM for evidence of the relations between the French and Vietnamese in the spatial patterns of archaeological materials and in the architectural

styles and building techniques of the occupants. The buildings of OBM, however, are in ruins. An assessment of the processes that resulted in the destruction of structures is necessary to assess the integrity of, and to interpret, the archaeological evidence. The following section reviews a study that highlights the importance of sentiment in the archaeological formation process.

#### **4-4-3 Archaeological ceramics and colonial cultural identity**

Ceramics have been a central feature of many archaeological studies since the early nineteenth century studies of English barrows and later nineteenth century studies of Egyptian archaeology (Rice 1987;25, Gibson & Woods 1990;7-8). They are popular because of the long history of ceramic production and because they are among the most long-lived archaeological materials. Moreover, ceramics have formed a central part of ordering peoples lives. Traditionally, ceramic production in many parts of the world, including Southeast Asia, was associated with particular villages, often techniques and skills passed from generation to generation of a single family. Hodder (1982;162) noted that pottery in particular, is an aspect of material culture that helped form, and legitimate, social categories in periods of increasing contradictions. Traditional ceramic production, however, has been particularly sensitive to modernisation.

Archaeological ceramic studies generally fall into three main categories.

Classification studies compare groups of items or fragments that are associated with a particular culture and time. Changes in fashion over time, for example, can indicate rapid change or gradual development. Decorative studies focus on decorative motifs and styles of pottery to yield insights into the lives of the people, their aesthetic perceptions as well as their ideological systems. The gradual integration of foreign motifs or techniques can show intercultural interaction. Technological studies look at the composition of materials used (Rice 1987;25-6). Two examples show how ceramics have contributed to an understanding of the processes of colonialism.

Knappett and Nikolakopoulou (2008) used a comparison between imported and local pots to examine aspects of colonialism in a bronze age site on the island of Thera, just north of Crete. Here they noted that imported Cretan pots appeared to be used to enhance social status among the local inhabitants. They did not necessarily exert,

however, a significant influence on local practices. Over time, the gradual adoption and integration of imported styles and production techniques suggested that ceramic articles were at the heart of a cultural process of object-led acculturation.

Immonen (2007) noted that the provenance and distribution of ceramics has played a central role in the study of economic and exchange systems in medieval European archaeology. Immonen's study of a medieval site, Turku, in Finland, dating from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries AD, compared the difference between the distribution of imported German ceramics and the documentary sources for the influence of German merchants. Immonen noted the large proportion of imported German ceramics in the fourteenth century in particular, and also recorded the high economic and social value associated with the imports. Immonen concluded that the urban material culture of Turku, represented mainly by the ceramic artefacts, seemed independent of ethnic borders recorded in written sources. These studies are mentioned to indicate the widespread use of ceramic studies in archaeology, and their adaptability to issues of cultural interaction in contexts of colonialism.

#### **4-5 Archaeological taphonomy**

Taphonomy refers to the study of the 'formative and disturbance processes affecting the archaeological record' that occur between its initial deposition and the recovery, or recording, of the remains by an archaeologist (Dawdy, 2006:719; Mignon, 1993). 'Site formation' is a similar term that may include aspects of the behaviour that resulted in the initial deposition of the archaeological remains (Schiffer, 1983). It is essential to evaluate the development of the archaeological record to be able to infer the behaviour that contributed to its nature. The significance of taphonomic or site formation processes has grown in archaeology in the last thirty years, partly as a consequence of the increase in cultural heritage studies. An understanding of taphonomic processes contributes to an assessment of the integrity of a site which is crucial in determining its heritage or archaeological significance. An understanding of site formation processes is similarly significant in reconstructing past behaviours and environments (Rick, Erlandson, & Vellanoweth, 2006:567).

The degradation of archaeological deposits or sites is caused by specific processes, which may be cultural or natural, and which may have specific impacts on

archaeological remains, and over time, destroy specific aspects of the archaeological deposit. Of course, site formation is invariably the consequence of a combination of taphonomic processes. Rick *et al.* (2006:568-571) argued for a widespread need for taphonomic overviews of specific regions and environments to facilitate research in a variety of topics. They provide a list and evaluation of eight natural and three cultural taphonomic processes that have impacted archaeological deposits on the Channel Islands, off the coast of California in the US. The natural processes include both above and below ground animals, plants, wind, water and soil movements. Their impacts include the removal, addition and re-deposition of materials and deposits; mixing, disturbing and reducing archaeological materials. The cultural influences include prehistoric and historic human activities, and the introduction of domestic animals. Among the historic impacts they list building and road construction, bombing and looting, which impact on the archaeological record by moving, fragmenting and destroying it. Many of these processes are in evidence in Bach Mã and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7-3.

Rick *et al.* focus on the taphonomic impacts on archaeological deposits and middens, as does Schiffer (1983) in his overview of site formation processes. Schiffer also noted several factors that are relevant to the above-ground archaeological remains at Bach Mã. For example, in a discussion on size of archaeological remains he noted that in abandoned structures larger items are likely to accumulate as primary refuse, and easily replaced items are more often deposited as refuse (Schiffer, 1983:679). This has particular relevance for the timber wall and roof frameworks used in OBM structures. He noted that collecting and scavenging operates preferentially on specific size ranges of artefacts (Schiffer, 1983:680). One of the most commonly observed factors in recording material evidence is whether an artefact is intact or fragmented, because this influences the interpretation of depositional factors. In deposits of rubbish, for example, it is likely that an assemblage will have no intact material (Schiffer, 1983:681). Fire is a common feature, often associated with abrupt abandonment or planned destruction. The effects of fire are material specific and easily recognisable (Schiffer, 1983:684). For example, carbonised wood is readily preserved and smoke scarred walls will retain their blackened surface for a considerable time, especially when protected from direct exposure to the elements. Another important factor that Schiffer (1983:685) noted is that cultural formation

processes have a significant influence on the horizontal distribution of artefacts. He referred to a study by South (1977) who used artefact distribution patterns relative to structures on historic sites to distinguish several varieties of refuse, and Goodyear *et al.* (1979) who used the intra-site distribution of temporally diagnostic artefacts to identify separate episodes of occupation.

Recent interest in taphonomic processes has extended to the taphonomic influences associated with natural disasters. Dawdy (2006:726) recognised two approaches to disasters in recent volumes. There are studies that look at cultural issues in relation to catastrophic events like volcanic eruptions and earthquakes (Torrence & Grattan, 2002). The other area of study looks at longer term issues of drought and climate change, that may have as dramatic influence on human cultures, but which are expressed over a longer period (Hoffman & Oliver-Smith, 2002). There is some debate about whether war should be considered in a review of taphonomic issues and natural disasters, with Dawdy (2006:727) arguing that there are good reasons for including it. The issues surrounding social recovery from war and natural disasters may have some interesting comparisons in the archaeological record.

Dawdy's (2006) study focused on the reconstruction of New Orleans following the disastrous consequences of two storms, Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita, that in August and September 2005 resulted in flooding of large parts of New Orleans and the death of more than 1800 people. Dawdy (2006:719-724) argued that the processes that create the archaeological record are inseparable from the political, economic, ecological, and even the emotional processes that create society. She (Dawdy, 2006:725) commented on the looting that took place in flooded New Orleans and suggested that it exposed the contradictions in the moral-social order in the modern US, in which freedom and identity were expressed through consumption of material goods. The taphonomic processes associated with the recovery from a natural disaster include the 'cultural logic that decides what is to be recycled, what is to be discarded and how' (Dawdy, 2006:719). Dawdy argued that the creation of a new archaeological record in the process of recovery following a disaster is a primary medium through which individuals and communities reconstitute themselves. Disasters (and here I would include wars) 'define a period of heightened, and therefore perhaps more archaeologically visible, emotional responses worthy of interpretive attempts' (Dawdy, 2006:722). Dawdy showed that emotional responses,

sometimes to political decisions during a phase of social reconstruction, can have an effect on the nature of the archaeological record. In some cases, only through considering such aspects among site formation processes can the site be understood.

#### **4-6 Summary**

Archaeological studies of colonialism in the US and elsewhere, have used techniques from landscape archaeology, spatial analysis and architectural studies that offer a new approach to the study of a colonial site in Vietnam. Landscapes are aspects of space where people create and sustain their social identities. This is often clearly reflected in the maps they produce. Maps are a source of knowledge and power, created by, and often only able to be understood by, the literate elite.

The influence of social theory during the twentieth century has had a profound influence on archaeological studies. The recognition that spatial relationships structure social relationships was incorporated into archaeological studies in the 1960s and 1970s. Proponents of structuralism looked for shared, unconscious cultural behaviour, while advocates of structuration argued that people understand the meaning of what they did and could control their actions. Furthermore, if people know that their behaviour is being observed they are likely to adjust their behaviour to conform to what they think is expected by the observer. At the same time it is important to remember that there are many different perspectives of space and time, often relating to the same place and at the same time. Spatial analyses of archaeological remains that focus on social relationships have been done on a landscape scale, as well as within sites and on a regional scale. Social dominance, resistance and collaboration have all been associated with colonial site archaeology and may be reflected in the material culture even if not referred to in the documentary history. Acculturation, the sharing of cultural traits among different cultural groups is another approach to colonial social interaction.

Plantation archaeology has provided a particularly relevant perspective on the material expression of markedly hierarchical social structures. In the US and Caribbean, changes in the social organisation of capitalism have been the focus of archaeological studies that relate spatial organisation and architecture to intercultural and interclass social relations. Domestic architecture also has significant potential to



reflect social status, through its location, both in the landscape and relative to its neighbours. The provenance and distribution of ceramics can also reflect cultural identity as well as the process of acculturation in a colonial context.

Finally, the chapter highlighted the significance of archaeological site formation processes and signals the potential for people's attitudes and emotional responses, especially during social reconstruction following a disaster or conflict, to be represented in the archaeological record. In the next chapter, the specific sources and research methods employed in the study of Bạch Mã will be described.

## Chapter 5 Sources and research methods

### 5-1 Introduction

The fieldwork for this research was undertaken in Central Vietnam over two field seasons, from 20 April to 14 July 2006 and 22 January to 7 July 2007. The objective of the fieldwork was to identify all local sources of information about Bạch Mã and its history and to use this to enhance an archaeological field survey of the site being undertaken concurrently. This chapter details the sources of information identified and the research methods for the study.

BMNP provided several key documents relating to the colonial history of Bạch Mã at the beginning of the research project. Further research to identify historical sources in the local Huế public and institutional libraries added a few documents, but of limited value. Similar searches were requested in the National Library in Hanoi and the Social Science library in HCMC, again with limited results. Several documents were provided through private sources in Huế City. In total about twenty documents including maps, most in French or Vietnamese, that referred to Bạch Mã Mountain and in particular OBM were identified and translated. This chapter begins with a review of documentary sources related to Bạch Mã and their usefulness. One of the most valuable documents was a map of OBM that dates from about 1943. This map formed the basis of the field survey and it is discussed below in section 5.3. An early objective for this study was to source original planning documents to try to understand the reasons for the development of OBM. The constraints on access to French documentation and archival sources, discussed in more detail in the following section 5-2, supported an approach to the study that emphasised a Vietnamese perspective at OBM, based on local information sources.

The development of OBM occurred in the 1930s and 1940s, a period within living memory. During the fieldwork it became clear that there were people both in the local village, Cầu Hai, near BMNP and in Huế who would be happy to talk about their own experience. A series of informal interviews were undertaken by myself in Huế, Hanoi and HCMC with people who had had an involvement in OBM. Furthermore, five recorded interviews between BMNP staff and former residents of OBM were

provided to me by the BMNP management. The background to the oral history collection is outlined in Section 5.4.

A significant element of the archaeological record in Bạch Mã was in the form of ceramic food-related items. Section 5-5 outlines the information sources on colonial era ceramics in Vietnam and the efforts made to identify the dates and provenance of a series of items recorded during the survey. Section 5.6 outlines the nature of the archaeological resources identified in Bạch Mã and how they were recorded during the field survey. This section includes an overview of the field survey strategy, the recording of architectural sites and smaller items of cultural heritage (the ceramics). Section 5.7 provides a brief review of some of the advantages and constraints of the study area, including environmental and cultural factors. The chapter concludes with a description of the management and presentation of data.

## **5-2 Historical sources**

One of the major limitations of the histories of colonial Vietnam in the English language is that these sources focus on the main population centres of Hanoi and Saigon. That is where most of the economic development occurred under French colonial rule, and the main political developments occurred during the 1930s and 1940s. Huế was the capital of Annam and the imperial capital of Vietnam with at least token administrative responsibility for the protectorate of Tonkin as well as Annam. Despite its distinctive position and history, Huế played a relatively peripheral role in the great struggle for Vietnamese independence which dominate the twentieth century histories of Vietnam. Consequently, the English language literature on Vietnamese history, including Hammer (1954), Marr (1971; 1981), Duiker (1981) and Cooper (2001) rarely mentions Central Vietnam except as a subsidiary to the events in Hanoi and Saigon.

It was, therefore, necessary to find alternative sources to explore the specific social, political and economic environment of Central Vietnam, and of Thừa Thiên Province, Huế City and Phú Lộc District in particular. A French language journal *Bulletin Des Amis Du Vieux Hue* (Bulletin of the Friends of Old Hue (BAVH)) published in Huế between 1914 and 1944 was of particular value for providing local context because many of the association's publishing members, both French and Vietnamese, were

long-term residents of Central Vietnam who had an interest in describing the country from a scientific perspective. The journal included papers on anthropology, archaeology, botany, geography and history. Many papers focused on Central Vietnam and Huế in particular. Furthermore, some of the members of the association were landholders in OBM. The journal is dedicated to research into earlier historical periods, however, a number of papers from the 1920s and earlier comment on local industries at the time. During those crucial years in the 1940s, however, the papers in BAVH deal exclusively with earlier imperial and colonial history and there is no comment on the events in Annam at that time. Perhaps the lack of contemporary, local commentary in BAVH is explained by the appearance of Japanese characters in journal articles during the early 1940s, sometimes on the cover, sometimes in the text translating particular points. This suggests that the journal was not in a position to discuss sensitive political issues because of the Japanese presence in the city and interest in the journal. The papers of particular interest for the current study appeared in earlier issues and included papers on Bana from 1924 (Sallet, 1924) and on the local pottery industry (Rigaux, 1917) including one paper that described a group of ceramic craft villages in Bình Định Province that are examined from a technical/anthropological perspective (Bulteau, 1927). Unfortunately, it contained little useful information about Bạch Mã specifically.

Other published sources in French include volumes on Vietnamese history (Brocheux & Hemery, 1995), and biographies of French people who spent time in Vietnam, most significantly Jean Decoux, Governor-General from 1940-1945 (Decoux, 1949). Although my French skills are limited, I could identify major topics of interest in French texts and then translate relevant parts using the internet translation programme ([www.freetranslation.com/free/](http://www.freetranslation.com/free/)) if the source was in an electronic format, or word by word with the help of a French/English dictionary. Translations in both cases were useful if not quotable. Fortunately, a growing number of memoirs from the colonial period are being published in English (Osborne, 2000; Perkins, 2005), even occasionally based on events in Huế (Duong, 2005).

For the Vietnamese perspective of the French colonial era the main English language history of Vietnam (Vien, 1993) was useful for a general view. However, the coverage of developments in Huế over the period 1930-1945 was limited. In recent

years, a growing number of locally published books covering Huế history, have been printed in Vietnamese (Đỗ, 2000; Đỗ, Ngô, & Nguyễn, 2005; Hiền & Thuyên, 1999) as well as some periodical journals such as *Nghiên Cứu Huế* and *Xưa & Nay*. The first of these is a Vietnamese academic journal publishing mostly historical papers, the latter a general-interest magazine targeting a more popular readership. The periodic *Vietnamese Studies* published in Hanoi, provides English and French translations of Vietnamese research papers, and has several editions specialising in Huế culture. Much of this material covers the ancient history of Cham culture that occupied the region until the fourteenth century, and the Nguyễn Dynasty that unified Vietnam within its current borders and adopted Huế as the capital from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Vietnamese historiography presents another problem. Since the reunification of country under the North Vietnamese communist government, historical research in Vietnam has been a significant tool in the service of a socialist culture. ‘Products of the mind must be channelled into the service of the revolutionary line adopted by the party’ (Anh, 1995:122). There have been two fundamental themes in official Vietnamese history related to all periods, national resistance and peasant insurrection. The focus has been on ‘the history of the constitution of the nation, with its clearly delineated territory, its own language, its specific culture, which need to be protected against all external aggressions’ (Anh, 1995:124). Some aspects of recent history have been ‘absolutely obliterated’ and ‘ideology pervades all publication’ (Anh, 1995:131). Furthermore, since the adoption of the policy of *doi moi* in 1986, there has been a ‘relative disinterest ... in questions of war and politics’ (Anh, 1995:132).

Bach Mã Mountain summit plateau was surveyed and recommended for development in 1932 by M. Girard. No documents were available that explain the background for Girard’s survey. Published accounts of the development of OBM are rare, and most rely on an anonymous 1943 French article in the journal *Indochine* (Anonymous, 1943) that very briefly summarises the development of OBM (Anonymous, 1990; Đính, 2002; Eve, 1996; Hanh, 1992; Thân Trọng Ninh, 2002). Glerende (1939) provides a brief account of OBM in its early days of development.

To gain a clearer understanding of the reasons for the establishment of OBM it would have been useful to locate unpublished archival documents. Staff at BMNP requested information from the French National Archives for the French colonies (Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer) in 2002. However, the centre replied that 'the major part of the archives of the Superior Residence in Annam is preserved at the Centre of the National Archives in Vietnam' (a copy and translation of the letter are presented in Appendix A). They were able to provide a copy of only one document, the magazine article about Bạch Mã from 1939 (Glerende, 1939). The Vietnamese archives were closed for redevelopment during the fieldwork in 2007 and could not be accessed. Subsequent communication with the new facility in Đà Lạt indicated that documents relevant to Huế were limited to the post WWII period. Another potential source of information was recently identified in the *Nouvelle Association Des Amis Du Vieux Hué* (New Association of the Friends of Old Hue, NAAVH). The NAAVH was established in 1996 to continue the work of the colonial association, AVH, 1914-44. This new association was responsible for the development of a CD Rom version of the editions of the original association's bulletins, and continues to develop a library of resources related to Central Vietnam (<http://naavh.chez.com/index.html>).

The problem of historical sources is exacerbated further because Huế suffered more than most other Vietnamese cities during both the First and Second Indochina Wars. First, with the return of the French in 1947 when a large part of the administrative centre was destroyed (Virginia Thompson & Adloff, 1947:415) and then two decades later when the city was occupied by the NVA during the 1968 Tết offensive.

### **5-2-1 Unpublished sources**

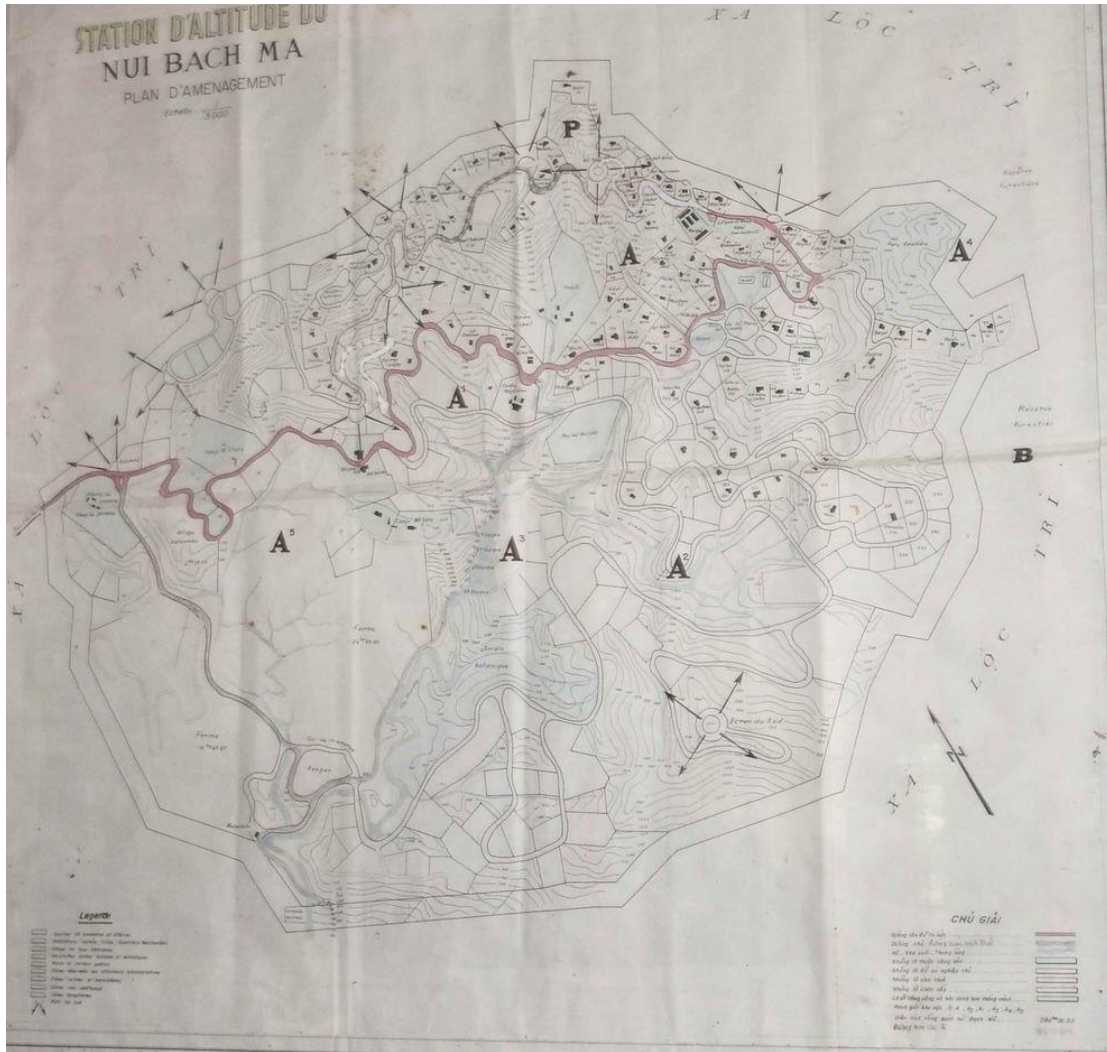
A number of unpublished documents relating to Bạch Mã were provided by people in Huế. Most interesting were hand drawn maps and sketches of OBM made by Mr Thân Trọng Ninh who visited the hill station over several summers until 1944. Other unpublished reports include a management plan for BMNP in English produced in 1990 (Anonymous, 1990) and a later proposal in French to extend the boundaries of the national park (Anonymous, 2001). A search in the National Library in Hanoi identified a copy of the urban regulations for OBM, (*Règlement De Police du Centre - Urbain de Bach Ma*, 1939). These documents dealing with the history of Bạch Mã provide the basis for Chapter 6.

A copy of the management plan for OBM from the 1930s and 1940s was not found during the fieldwork, however, a map with the same title indicates that such a document did exist. The *Station d'Altitude Nui Bach Ma Plan d'Amenagement* map became a central tool in this study's field survey and analysis of the hill station development. Its function in this study is described in the next section and it is examined in more detail in Chapter 6-4.

Several documents relating specifically to the history of the Bạch Mã Scout Leaders' Training Camp that operated in OBM from 1938 until 1945 were provided by several people involved with the modern scouting movement in Central Vietnam. These form the basis for an overview in Chapter 6-7 of the Boy Scouts movement in Central Vietnam and in Bạch Mã in particular.

### **5-3 The OBM map**

The *Station d'Altitude Nui Bach Ma Plan d'Amenagement* map provides the most coherent overview of OBM from the period of 1943 when OBM was at its peak. Maps are produced by someone and maps have users; they are made for a purpose. The cartographer is not mentioned but the title of the map indicates that this cadastral map was used in the planning and management of OBM. It represents the only available element of the Bạch Mã management plan. The map was given to the BMNP in the mid 1990s by the Provincial Planning Office in Huế and is now displayed in the Visitors Centre at the entrance to BMNP (see Figure 5.1). The map is referred to in this thesis as 'OBM Map 1'.



**Map 5- 1 The cadastral map of OBM in the Visitors Centre at BMNP showing lots, lot numbers, names and including both a French and a Vietnamese language legend.**

OBM Map 1 is a cadastral map originally produced at a scale of 1:3000 that shows topography and the general layout of the summit plateau development including roads and buildings. It shows lots that had been developed, including the names of many of the lot owners. As well it shows lots available for development and areas allocated to farming and conservation. It gives a clear perspective of the broad concept of OBM. The map only details the approximately 300 hectares of the summit plateau. The boundary shown on the map is in fact an escarpment that drops as much as 300 metres to the upper slopes of Bạch Mã Mountain.

Geographic Positioning System (GPS) readings were taken at key points around the summit plateau during an early visit to Bạch Mã. These allowed a digitised version of the OBM Map 1 to be produced that incorporated a standard grid. A GPS receiver could then be used during the field survey to locate a position on the map. The field



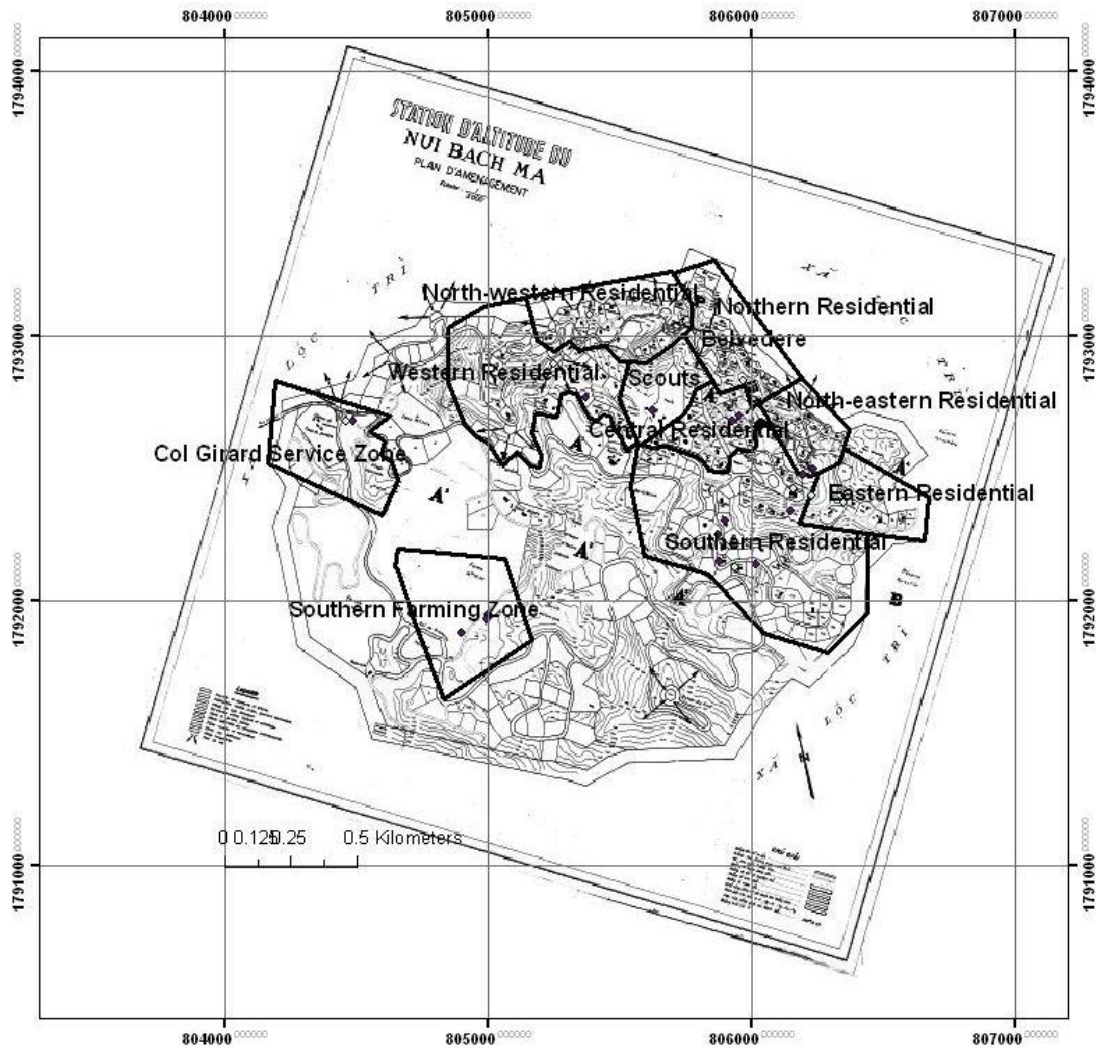
survey demonstrated that the map has a high degree of accuracy. In many cases, individual villas were able to be identified and associated with a named occupant. There is, however, one area where GPS positions at known points differed significantly from the map. The main problem area was in the eastern ridge area, where the Hồ Đắc Di residence appears on the map about 100 metres north of the GPS fix, while 300 metres to the west of this site the map position and GPS fixes coincided. The accuracy of the GPS was affected by the number of satellites within range which was influenced by the topography. In areas with steep slopes and high hills the accuracy of a GPS is reduced. Thick tree canopy also reduces accuracy. In areas with high surrounding hills and heavy tree cover it was not possible to identify locations within fifty metres, but in high, clear positions the correspondence between map and GPS readings could be within five metres.

The *Indochine* article of 1943 refers to 130 cottages constructed up to 1943. The map identifies about 120 structures, including the post office, two Résidences supérieur and two hotels, several non-cottage structures such as the hospital, military camp and market. Another version of the map (OBM Map 2) is held at the summit guesthouse in BMNP, which includes the same basic information, but includes at least one additional occupant's name. It includes some additional colouring of areas to differentiate residential and other areas in OBM, although the colour has faded. OBM Map 2 has the advantage that it clearly shows the main drainage lines across the summit plateau as well as roads. It is also discussed in more detail in Chapter 6-5. The accuracy of the map in relation to the main landscape features and roads generally corresponded very well with a hand-held GPS receiver during the field survey. The plot-owner's identification shown on the map is also considered good, based upon the evidence of, Mr Thân Trọng Ninh's independent records of his own family's properties which correspond with the map.

### **5-3-1 Zoning OBM for the field survey and architectural site recording programme**

The map formed the basis of the field survey. For the purposes of this study, the map was divided into ten zones, seven focusing on the residential areas of OBM, the remaining three focusing on the Scout Camp, the Vietnamese village and market (Col

Girard Zone 8) and the farming area indicated on OBM Map 1 in the southwest of the plateau (see Map 5.2).



Map 5- 2 OBM Map1 digitised at UNE in 2006 showing the general position of the survey zones.

The first seven analytical zones were selected systematically across the development area, incorporating only areas showing existing residential development, rather than all available lots. Field survey, and the experience of BMNP staff, suggests that there was no residential development outside the main areas indicated on the map. The zones are described below in relation to the main topographic features and the main access road. The main topographic feature associated with the residential areas is the highest summit of Bạch Mã Mountain referred to as ‘Belvedere’ (1450masl) which during the French era offered the best views in all directions, and in particular to the coast and north as far as Huế. The lights of Đà Nẵng can be seen from Belvedere at

night and to the southwest it is possible to see Bana Hill Station as well. The analytical zones are:

1. **Northwest Ridge Residential Zone 1 (NWR):** NWR extends west from Belvedere for about 600 metres to incorporate the main western ridge, west of the summit and immediately south down-slope to incorporate several additional structures. The NWR zone occupies about thirteen to fourteen hectares and includes a number of lots with colonial government institutions named as occupiers as well as a *Résidence supérieure*. (A more detailed map of each survey area is included in Chapter 7.)
2. **Northern Ridge Residential Zone 2 (NR):** NR incorporates Belvedere and lots north and southeast along the ridge from Belvedere for about 400 metres and occupies about six hectares. NR includes a small number of structures on a small spur running south from the summit.
3. **Northeast Ridge Residential Zone 3 (NER):** The NER zone occupies about five hectares and covers lots east of the market, several lots along a small spur running south of the Post Office down to the Hôtel Bany on the southern side of the main access road, and several ridge top sites east of the Post Office.
4. **Central Residential Zone 4 (CR):** The CR analytical zone occupies an area of about thirteen hectares south and southwest below the northern and northeast ridges, and north of the main access road.
5. **Eastern Residential Zone 5 (ER):** The ER zone occupies an area of about five to six hectares, on the southern slopes of one of the four peaks of Bạch Mã Mountain and along a ridge running west of this peak.
6. **Western Residential Zone 6 (WR):** The WR occupies a relatively large area of about seventeen hectares, west of the Boy Scout camp, east of the military camp and north of the main access road.
7. **The Southern Residential Zone 7 (SR):** The SR zone covers most of the residential development south of the main access road and west of the eastern residential zone. It covers a relatively large area of about forty-five hectares.
8. **Boy Scout Camp Zone 8 (BSC):** The Scouts' camp covers an area of about three hectares located centrally in OBM adjacent to a new dam supplying water to a water treatment plant.

9. **Col Girard Analytical Zone 9 (CG):** The Col Girard zone is located in the western parts of the Bạch Mã plateau and incorporates three main cultural features: the Vietnamese market, the Vietnamese village and a youth camp.
10. **Southwest Farming Zone 10 (SWF):** The southwest farming zone includes a cluster of small sites adjacent to the Five Lakes Walking Trail, a popular tourist walk that leads to the spectacular Rhododendron Falls.

The map formed the basis for the field survey program discussed in Section 5.5

#### **5-4 Oral history project**

This section describes the background and process of the collection of oral histories relating to OBM. The oral history project ran over twelve months, from June 2006 to June 2007 in collaboration with BMNP staff. It initially came about through BMNP staff contacts in Cầu Hai Village which is located at the foot of Bạch Mã and through which the access road passes (part of Phú Lộc District). Several interviews were also undertaken in Huế as a result of personal introductions by colleagues. A joint oral history project with BMNP staff was proposed for the local village because the national park staff had already planned a programme of recording local peoples' stories for use in the BMNP Visitors Centre and its website. However, I withdrew from participation in the oral history project in Cầu Hai because of a number of issues involving the participation of a foreigner. I focused on a series of interviews with three people in Huế, as well as two others, one in Hanoi and the other in HCMC. BMNP later provided copies of the interviews recorded in Cầu Hai which were translated in 2008.

In April 2006 approval was granted to undertake the collection of oral histories in Vietnam, from the UNE Human Research Ethics Committee, under approval number HE06/072. A number of conditions apply to the approval to undertake the oral history research. Briefly, approval for the research was conditional on the participants being advised of the background and proposed uses of the information collected. A signed consent form was required to be collected as evidence of the disclosure of the intended use. A form entitled 'Information for Participants' (IFP) was developed that outlined the background and proposed use of the data (see Appendix B-2). This, with the 'Consent Form' (Appendix B-3), was translated into Vietnamese by Tôn Thất

Hoàng Vinh of BMNP. The IFP, which included names and contact details of the research team, was given to participants to keep while the consent form that outlined the requirements of the participant as far as the use and retention of information was concerned, was kept securely by myself. Copies of transcripts and/or recordings were provided to participants and where approval was given, a copy was given to the national park.

BMNP staff were unfamiliar with this type of guiding/overseeing ethics committee. They expressed concern that asking participants to sign the required consent form would make them reticent about talking freely, especially in the presence of a foreigner. Some participants seemed bemused at the foreign concepts included in the required paperwork, but all participants were more than happy to talk to BMNP staff about their memories, though few were prepared to sign a consent form. Not all were prepared to allow their knowledge to be incorporated in the BMNP website, or even be left in the care of BMNP. In one instance a group of scout leaders jointly declined to sign the consent form before a field excursion to the Bạch Mã Scout Leaders' Training Camp so their discussions were not recorded. Recorded interviews were transcribed and translated into English by Nguyễn Thị Diệu Vân in Huế City. Conditions of collaboration with BMNP staff and cross cultural understanding with potential participants made complying with the Ethics Committee requirements difficult, so that only two consents were received, both of those from participants in Huế.

Conditions imposed by Vietnamese authorities were that if the foreign researcher was to be involved in local interviews, the BMNP staff were required to advise the local Phú Lộc police the names of all the people to be interviewed, including time and place, and a full list of questions. The police wanted to be present for any interviews undertaken by the foreign researcher. But where local interviews were to be undertaken by a local person with no foreign participation police supervision was not required. At this point I withdrew from participation in the village interview program to allow it to proceed without interference.

The first village participant in the oral history project was Bà Bờ, a neighbour of Mr Phuong, one of the staff of BMNP. Lê Quý Minh, a senior member of the BMNP

Visitors Centre staff and Mr Phuong interviewed her and recorded the conversation on a digital recorder that could later be downloaded onto a computer. In some later interviews and with the consent of participants, Lê Quý Minh also filmed the interview on a digital camera. The use of digital technology was favoured for its potential value on the BMNP website, where a page was proposed to be developed subsequently devoted to the history of OBM (see <http://www.bachmaeco.vnn.vn>).

Lê Quý Minh began with a series of questions that covered several topics related to the history of OBM and for the management of BMNP. The broad topics were:

- Identify people with direct experience and knowledge of Old Bach Ma.
- Learn about who lived and worked at Old Bach Ma in the 1930s and 1940s.
- Learn about living conditions in OBM at the time.
- Learn about memorable events that happened at specific places in OBM.
- Learn about environmental conditions in OBM in the 1930s and 1940s.
- Identify local places of heritage interest outside the national park.

During the interviews, and this was the case with most participants, the direction of the conversation followed the recollections of the participant, with the interviewer directing the conversation towards the target topics and questions when appropriate. Some questions were irrelevant for some participants, and sometimes unexpected comments from the participant led to new areas of discussion. Participants were mostly in their eighties or nineties and tired quickly, often before the end of the scheduled hour interview so that in a number of cases where the information was thought important, return visits were made.

The selection of participants was usually the result of word of mouth. Participants would recommend that someone in particular might be able to comment on some aspects of history of OBM, based on their roles at the time. In Cầu Hai Village and beyond in Phú Lộc District, Lê Quý Minh undertook all interviews, sometimes with the aid of Mr Phuong, who is well known and liked in the local village of Cầu Hai.

In Huế City I interviewed Mr Lê Hữu Con with translation assistance by Mrs Nguyễn Thị Diệu Vân following the outline adopted by Lê Quý Minh. Two additional Huế

residents in particular contributed to the study. Mr Thân Trọng Ninh, who was fluent in English and had spent considerable time in OBM up to 1944. As a young man in his late teens and early twenties while he was a student in Huế, Thân Trọng Ninh spent his summer holidays at his uncle's house in OBM. The Thân Trọng family had four houses in OBM. I spent many hours talking to Mr Ninh, only occasionally about OBM. Also in Huế, Mr Nguyễn Thúc Tuân had been a leader in the Hội Hướng Đạo Việt Nam (HHDVN), the Boy Scout Movement in Vietnam, and had trained at the Bạch Mã Leaders' Training Camp in OBM in the late 1930s and 1940s. Mr Nguyễn Thúc Tuân and his contacts from the Scout movement were able to provide a number of documents about Vietnamese Scouting and the Bạch Mã training camp, its establishment and operation. Mr Tuân also spoke English fluently, however, because of his deafness he found it convenient to respond in writing to written questions. His main response is reproduced in Appendix B-10.

The oral histories are discussed in Chapter 6 and 7 and available transcripts are included in Appendix B along with copies of translations of the IFP and consent forms.

### ***5-5 Sources for the identification of colonial period ceramics in Vietnam***

Ceramic artefacts including both food-related and non-food-related items formed a significant element of the Bạch Mã archaeological record. The majority of these were identified as Vietnamese, however, both French and Chinese items were also present. The following discussion outlines the sources on Vietnamese ceramics and the nature of the craft in Central Vietnam in the early twentieth century. Map 0-2 following the Abstract shows the general location of most places mentioned in this section.

Ceramic production dates back 10,000 years in the northern parts of Vietnam, especially in Lạng Sơn and Nghệ An Provinces (Chương, 2005:7). The Chinese introduced new techniques and materials during their long occupation of northern Vietnam that ended in 938 AD. Since that time, the Red River Delta has always been the principal area of production because of its access to good quality clays and a river system that allowed ready transport of raw materials and products. Vietnamese wares were highly regarded in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when they were popular

in Japan, the Philippines and Indonesia, and they were traded as far as the Persian Gulf (Guy, 1997:55). The main production centres for export products at that time were around Hanoi, most significantly at Chu Đậu Village in Hải Dương Province. There were also important kilns in Central Vietnam and Churong (2005:13) referred to sites in Quảng Nam, Quảng Ngãi as well as Bình Định, south of Bạch Mã, where glazed bowls, dishes and various objects were produced. Brown noted that Vietnamese ceramics beyond the eighteenth century remain largely undefined (Brown, 2000:29).

A new era opened at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the Nguyễn dynasty united the country for the first time and established their capital in Huế. The new Confucianist court favoured Chinese food-related ceramics for their fine quality wares. The distinctive *bleu de Hué* porcelains from this period are associated with the Nguyễn dynasty but they were produced in China to Vietnamese designs (Stevenson, 1997:42). The local ceramic industry around Huế focused on architectural ceramics suitable for the imperial buildings around the city. These included glazed bricks, window ornaments, and figures such as lions and dragons, used to decorate buildings and monuments (Rigaux, 1917). It was at this point that most research interest in Vietnamese ceramics ends (Brown, 2000; Guy, 1997; Harrisson, 1982; Richards, 1995; Young, Dupoizat, & Lane, 1982). For the French who colonised Annam in 1883 the Vietnamese ceramic industry was a potential competitor for their own ceramic export industry so that the Vietnamese industry received little development support during the colonial period, although at the beginning of the twentieth century the establishment of the Ceramics and Bronze Casting Fine Art School at Biên Hoà near Saigon developed new styles that combined those of ancient China and the French Limousin School of Ceramics (Churong, 2005:64). From the Vietnamese perspective French ceramics were neither affordable nor culturally appropriate so that Vietnamese products and Chinese imports continued to supply the local market. By 1931 the local ceramic industry in Annam was poorly developed in relation to glazed wares so that the majority of cups and similar implements were imported from Tonkin or China (Gilbert, 1931:153). Kilns in Annam produced mainly vases, pots, figurines and architectural items. Gilbert noted, however, that every province had its own kilns to produce tiles, bricks and lime.



Bulteau (1927) published a study of a group of seventeen ceramic craft villages in Bình Định Province within about ten kilometres of the well known Go Sanh kilns that are usually attributed to the Cham culture (Brown, 2000:37). Bulteau showed how each village specialised in different types of products and how they used traditional manufacturing techniques that dated back hundreds of years. Products were traded locally or into neighbouring provinces.

Lewis (1980) published the only archaeological study of twentieth century Vietnamese ceramics from a site at Biên Hoà near Saigon after he served there in the US military in 1970. Maps of the study area showed a rubber plantation management settlement dating from the 1920s and Lewis's objective was principally to document a 'group of ceramics largely ignored because of their late date of manufacture and their lack of artistic significance' and also to examine how the colonial period ceramics 'reflect the system's operation at the place where they were deposited' (Lewis, 1980:99). He developed a model of colonial ceramic use as part of his study. He noted that under the restrictive French trade regulations the only sources for ceramics in French Indochina were France, China and Vietnam. France produced and imported into Indochina European types of ceramics exclusively for use by French colonists and acculturated Vietnamese. The Chinese produced oriental-types for the Southeast Asia trade. The Vietnamese produced oriental-types for domestic use. Lewis (1980:114) noted that the Chinese industry had declined in stylistic and technical quality due to industrialisation resulting in a proliferation of 'moldmade, mechanically decorated pottery'. Vietnamese ceramics from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had been largely unstudied but he suggested that they were likely to retain elements of earlier Annamese wares because of the country's relative isolation. They were likely to have been produced entirely for the domestic market and to have been traded locally or regionally.

During the field survey of Bạch Mã ceramics were recorded that matched Lewis's three types: French products in a European style; moulded, mechanically decorated items that were probably Chinese imports; and most commonly, products reflecting older, traditional manufacturing techniques interpreted as local Vietnamese. Examples of the last category were shown to three ceramic experts in Huế, each of whom had a different interpretation. One interpretation was that they were typical of

wares found from southern China to Saigon. A second opinion was that they probably originated in Chu Đậu, one of the oldest ceramic production centres in the Red River Valley. Thirdly, there was a suggestion that they were produced in one of the ceramic craft villages in Central Vietnam. To test the last suggestion I first visited a formerly well known ceramic production centre at Phước Thíc pottery village in Quảng Trị Province north of Huế. An old lady, Bà Vit, who had worked in the kilns before the French destroyed them in 1950, said that the Phước Thíc kilns produced different wares altogether. There are numerous other ceramic craft villages in the three provinces to the south of Thừa Thiên Huế, but I was unable to visit them in 2007. Similar examples to my Type 1 bowls were seen in an antique shop in Huế and the owner argued that they were about 500 years old. Visits to museums and antique shops in Hanoi, Chu Đậu and in HCMC failed to locate similar rice bowls to those in Huế and Bạch Mã.

I was unable to collect sufficient information to define the ceramic items at Bạch Mã more precisely than that they were a mixture of French and Chinese imports and local Vietnamese products.

## **5.6 *Archaeological resources***

Archaeological remnants are distributed across most of the Bạch Mã summit plateau, but vary in nature and concentration in the analytical zones. The size and nature of the study area, combined with limited resources, defined the nature of the field survey. Only artefacts located on, or visible at, the ground surface were recorded during the survey. Excavation of potential rubbish pits adjacent to villas was considered a potential source of comparative data, but was not pursued for several reasons. Firstly, excavation was not favoured because of concern that it might result in environmental damage in the national park. In such a high rainfall area excavation created significant risks of subsequent erosion on slopes. Furthermore, the military activity that had taken place on the summit plateau in the 1960s and 1970s created additional risks in terms of unexploded ordnance. Finally, few sites were identified as rubbish pits with good archaeological potential.

The strategy adopted was to record accessible surface archaeological resources. These fell into three categories that relate to the three main phases of occupation. The

French period was represented principally by architectural structures, most commonly residential structures referred to as villas or chalets. A number of other site types from the French period were recorded including the Hôtel Bany and a structure near it interpreted as a hydrotherapy facility, the nearby market site, the Scouts' camp and another youth camp. A number of smaller, moveable artefacts were also recorded and attributed to the French period including ceramic and glass artefacts. A number of glass bottles (wine, beer, water) were noted associated with several French architectural sites, but were not recorded because of their limited ability to provide cultural comparisons. The postcolonial phase of occupation was represented by Vietnamese ceramic bowls or fragments of bowls that were recorded across both residential and non-residential analytical zones. The third phase of occupation was from the Second Indochina War and the material evidence was in the nature of war damage and war relics, both constructed features and moveable items including unexploded ordnance.

### **5-6-1 Architectural structures**

The villas and other buildings ranged in condition from several that were totally destroyed as a result of bombing during the Second Indochina War, to several that retained substantially intact walls, though none had a roof and only a few had remnants of structural timber elements or window and door frames. Many structures were overgrown with canes, spiny palms, grass, shrubs and trees, which often made detailed recording impossible.

For each structure the location was recorded using a hand-held GPS receiver in combination with a consideration of the local topography indicated on OBM Map 1. A survey number was allocated that related to the analytical zone, so for example ERHS4 refers to the fourth house site recorded in the eastern residential area. Where possible outline plans were prepared of the ground floor layout to determine area and floor plan. Building materials used for wall construction were recorded and wall thickness noted. The codes used to record the main material of the outside walls is shown in Table 5.1. The site recording form is reproduced in Appendix C-9.

**Table 5.1 Codes representing type of walls**

Wall type	Code used
<b>None/Timber</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Granite stone</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Brick</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Cement bricks</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Concrete</b>	<b>5</b>

Code 1 was used when there was no evidence of a wall or there was evidence of a timber-frame to support a wall. In several cases timber post supports were noted in the form of a square cement frame about 200mm thick with a square hole in the middle about 100mm on each side. Occasionally these still held in place stumps of sawn timber. In some cases a similar sized series of holes along the edge of a concrete slab or in a stone foundation indicated a timber-framed wall, or alternatively a timber roof support. Just such a timber supported roof was evident in the garden area of the Hôtel Bany where a series of post supports were associated with a scatter of terracotta roofing tiles. The wall lining for timber-framed walls may have been sawn timber weatherboards as observed on several old structures in Tam Đảo in 2006 (personal observation). A more common construction technique in Indochina is the use of woven palm leaves that could be used for both walls and roofs. Code 2 refers to walls of quarried black granite stone that was sourced nearby on the summit plateau. A few structures were recorded using red clay bricks, Code 3 and one with cement bricks, Code 4. The most common building material was concrete, Code 5, that used a mixture of cement and river pebbles or coarse gravel, again sourced locally. One of the oral history participants talked about how sand was sourced locally on the summit plateau.

Roof tiles were common structural elements preserved in the archaeological record. Sometimes a scatter of roof tiles was the only evidence of a former structure. Tiles often included an embossed maker's name and the name of the city or province in which they were made and therefore give an indication of manufacturing provenance (see Appendix C, Figure C-38). Given that internal trade in Vietnam was disrupted from 1943 by the war, consideration of provenance offered an additional dating indicator for some structures. Where manufacturer's location was embossed on the tiles they are classified as local when the origin was within 100 kilometres of OBM. This includes Huế and Đà Nẵng and their respective provinces. If origin was

unknown they were assumed to be an import, probably from the major manufacturing centre around Hải Phòng in North Vietnam. The exception is with the traditional, flat shingle-type terracotta tiles (Type 2) used commonly in traditional local houses and in Huế. These tiles are also considered to be local. Codes were used for type of roofing tiles associated with structures to help later analysis. Table 5-2 lists fifteen types of roof tiles recorded. Tile type 4 was later recognised as the same as tile type 15. Tile type 15 is, therefore, is combined with type 4 and not referred to in the analysis. These types were confused initially because of difficulty with reading partial tiles.

**Table 5-2. Roofing tiles recorded in Bạch Mã showing codes and origin.**

Roofing tiles type	Code	Origin
None	1	Steel/Import or woven palm/local
Terracotta shingles	2	Local
Pressed square terra cotta with no motif	3	Unknown origin/ Import
Tuillerie Haiphonaise	4	Hải Phòng origin/ Import
SALLE	5	Unknown origin/ Import
Ho Dinh Liet Faifo (Thanh Ha Faifo)	6	Local Faifo refers to Hội An outside Đà Nẵng
N. H. D. Phong Dien	7	Local, town north of Huế
N. H. D. Danang	8	Local
Chu Van Luan	9	Unknown origin/ Import
Dinh Lieu & Fils	10	Possibly same as #6
Avenue Big Hot Hanoi	11	Hanoi origin/ Import
Hung Ky	12	Unknown origin/ Import
Stacinao Haiphong	13	Hải Phòng origin/ Import
Tuileries Quang Nam	14	Local, Quảng Nam province
Tuileries Haiphong	15	Hải Phòng origin/ Import same as 4.

Many structures had no roofing material for which there seems to be three possible explanations. Firstly, there may have been no roof because the structure was still under construction, however, no structures were recognised as unfinished for other reasons. Secondly, the roof may have been of steel that would have had a significant recycling value after OBM was abandoned by the French in 1945, so that no evidence remains onsite. No sites were recoded with remnants of roofing steel nearby. Thirdly, the structure may have had woven mat roofing. Examples of the latter two possibilities appear below in Figures 5.1 and 5.2. Figure 5.1 apparently accompanied the magazine article that described the US airborne assault on Bạch Mã (Higle, 1969) and suggests that at least some houses still had roofs during the Second Indochina

War. Figure 5.2 shows a house in the nearby hill station of Bana in 1924 that shows a common form of wall and roof construction employed in tropical environments (Sallet, 1924). Clearly, these materials were sourced close to the construction site.



**Figure 5- 1 A steel roof on a damaged house in 1969 (photo in Higl 1969)**



**Figure 5- 2 This chalet of the Chemin de fer in Bana in 1924 shows woven mat roofing, walls of mud daub and the floor set on low timber posts. (Sallet, 1924:374)**

Stone and timber were sourced locally on the plateau itself, and several places were noted where quarrying had been undertaken. Numerous roads were cut across the

landscape and can still be seen in many places in the forest supported by stone retaining walls. Extensive areas of the plateau were obviously cleared for residential development, and local timber species, such as *Hopia pierrei* were identified in remnants of wall posts at several sites by Forest Guards who assisted with much of the field survey work. Rocks and river pebbles used in concrete wall construction were readily available on the plateau. However, cement, clay bricks and roofing tiles had to be brought from the bottom of the mountain, and Bà Bờ in Cầu Hai village has discussed her experience working as a porter carrying these materials (see Chapter 6 and 7 and Appendix B-4). Of course, virtually all food and kerosene for lighting had to be brought to the summit, although some vegetable gardens were developed on the summit plateau. As hunting was a particular feature of colonial life it is likely that it was engaged in on Bạch Mã also (Rheinart Des Essarts, 1934).

In addition to the architectural remains a variety of moveable relics were associated with them including, in several cases, sanitary fittings such as ceramic and cement toilet and bathroom bowls, ceramic door knobs, glass bottles and jars, ceramic food-related bowls and a garden hoe found inside one of the villas. Recording focused on food-related ceramics because of their relative frequency in the assemblage and because they were cultural elements that were comparable in both Vietnamese and French material cultures.

### **5-6-2 Postcolonial era**

There have been three main phases of occupation of Bạch Mã since the end of the colonial era in 1954. The agricultural settlement and the Second Indochina War occupations before the current national park managed occupation are discussed in detail in the following chapters and are represented in the landscape of Bạch Mã in quite different ways. The first is referred to as the Vietnamese postcolonial occupation for which the main archaeological evidence is Vietnamese food-related ceramic items that were recorded across the study area. The most common type of ceramic items was an assemblage of small bowls typical of rice bowls used nowadays in Vietnamese meals. These were usually white glazed, often with a blue pattern or decoration, with a rim diameter of about 120mm. A number of features were recorded for ceramic items including: location, size, bowl rim and foot diameter, and decoration. An example of the ceramic item recording form is shown in Appendix D-

3. The same form was used to record all ceramic artefacts. The items were temporally ascribed to a French colonial or postcolonial origin in later analysis. Over sixty items were collected in the field to facilitate later detailed recording and photography. All ceramic items were retained by the national park for later display in the BMNP Visitors Centre and at tourist facilities at the summit and no ceramics were collected for analysis in Australia.

During the survey a particular type of ‘rice bowl’, Type 1, was identified repeatedly in different locations and contexts across the summit plateau. Two other types of rice bowl were also found in different locations. Bowls were defined as Type 1 (thirteen examples), Type 2 (five examples) and Type 3 (three examples) bowls. Details of the features that defined each type of bowl are presented in Appendix D-2. Photographs and recording details for all ceramic finds are also presented in Appendix D. Sources of information for these twentieth-century Central Vietnamese ceramics are discussed in Section 5-5. An example of a Type 1 bowl was taken to Hué to consult local ceramic experts regarding their possible origin. They were also taken to Phước Thíc, a ceramic craft village in Quảng Trị, and Chu Đậu, one of the oldest ceramic craft centres in northern Vietnam, to consult local experts and compare to museum collections. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7-5.

### **5-6-3 Second Indochina War**

A second significant postcolonial occupation of Bạch Mã before the present, occurred as a consequence of the Second Indochina War. Bạch Mã Mountain was a strategically significant feature that was the subject of fighting from about 1965 until about 1973. The material evidence of the war includes trenches, bunkers, tunnels and associated features. In many places on the southern slopes of Belvedere and the northern ridges barbed wire is common in the forest. Unexploded ordnance is occasionally found throughout the summit plateau, but is a particular issue along the northern ridges where most of the trenches also occur. Many of the villas along the northern ridges from the French period were incorporated into later defences. Almost all structures from the French period had bullet holes and damage to walls and window frames that was interpreted as war damage (see Figure 5.1). War damage and features such as trenches were noted during the recording of French architectural sites



and war related features, such as trenches and bomb craters, were noted on field work maps during the survey.

#### **5-6-4 Field survey programme**

A programme of field survey was undertaken in two stages to record as many of the ruins as possible. From documentary evidence it was anticipated that more than 130 structures were present when OBM was abandoned by the French in 1945 (Anonymous, 1943). OBM Map 1 provided details on the location of most structures that allowed areas to be targeted in the field survey. The survey aim was to record sites in all analytical zones on the summit plateau relating to the various occupation phases under study. Field surveys were usually undertaken with the assistance of staff of BMNP. However, when no-one was available I continued site recording alone in the more easily accessible areas. Access to many areas was not feasible because of forest cover and recent typhoon damage. When structures were located in the forest they were identified using a GPS where terrain and forest cover allowed reliable position fixes. Structures were recorded using a tape measure and a compass. Photographs were taken where possible using a digital camera, however, low light and encroaching forest resulted in many structures becoming indistinguishable in photographs. Structural details were recorded on a recording form (see Appendix C).

#### **5.7 Constraints and advantages of the site**

The study area provided both advantages and constraints for the study, which have to a large extent shaped the final interpretation of OBM presented in this thesis. One of the attractions of an archaeological approach to the study of Bạch Mã is that much of the summit plateau has remained relatively undisturbed since the French occupation. Compared to the other hill stations in Vietnam (Đà Lạt, Sapa, Tam Đảo and Bana) tourism development at Bạch Mã, under the national park administration, has only resulted in impacts on a relatively small proportion of the colonial sites. In Bạch Mã and Bana the effects of the Second Indochina War was extensive because of their strategic location. Despite postcolonial recycling and war damage many of the colonial sites in Bạch Mã remain relatively undisturbed. Bạch Mã is one of the only predominantly colonial sites in Vietnam that is readily accessible and has remained significantly undeveloped since the colonial occupation.

The environment also placed constraints on the fieldwork in two ways. Firstly, because of the location of Bạch Mã Mountain close to the coast combined with the tropical climate and altitude, the summit of the mountain is subject to frequent rain, storms and fog. Field survey was not possible in wet weather. A lot of potential survey time was lost because of rain and fog. In summer it is usually possible to get a morning's worth of survey work completed before the development of afternoon storms around the mountain summit. In 2007, the wet season in Central Vietnam finished late so that several weeks planned fieldwork were lost to inclement weather. On 1 October 2006 typhoon Xangshane hit the central coast of Vietnam causing a number of deaths in Đà Nẵng and extensive damage to the coastal settlements and villages in, and between, Đà Nẵng and Huế. The forest at the summit of Bạch Mã was severely damaged in places. This made field survey in 2007 impossible in some areas as the forest became impassable because of trees torn out of the ground and tangled in the undergrowth. This was a particular problem at the Vietnamese Village and Vietnamese Market sites, where the road from Cầu Hai first enters the summit plateau at Col Girard, at 1200masl. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to access the village site on top of a hill with the help of forest guard Vinh. Similarly, scheduled survey work at the Vietnamese market area at Col Girard was impossible because the area was covered in fallen trees.

The wet climate in Bạch Mã contributes to the tropical montane forest. One of the charms of Bạch Mã is that the ruins are scattered through the forest and overgrown with creepers, canes, palms and trees. Many locations could only be accessed by cutting through thick underbrush with a machete. There were also the expected forest hazards of snakes and scorpions, although these were never more than a potential problem. But the potential meant that it was usually necessary to work with an assistant in case of an emergency. In practice, when forest guards were unavailable I was forced to work alone, and this limited the extent of some surveys as I was conscious of the problem of working in remote places where it would be difficult to locate me if I had an accident.

## **5.8 Data presentation**

The historical data was incorporated into a time line that collates the main historical events, in Vietnam and globally, beside the development stages of Bạch Mã. The

timeline is presented in Appendix A-1. The fieldwork seasons were fully occupied in negotiating access and approvals, and collecting data. Archaeological resources were recorded in the field.

Data relating to architectural sites and ceramic relics were entered into separate Excel spreadsheets which allowed easy comparison of variables. The main data table for architectural sites appears in Appendix C-10, and the data table for ceramic relics in Appendix D-4. Site plans were hand drawn on graph paper from data recorded on a site recording form that is also reproduced in Appendix C. A ceramic item recording form appears in Appendix D.

To assist in the comparison of the room layout in architectural sites a method for the graphical representation of archaeological domestic structures was adapted from Dickens (1977). Rooms are represented as a point, with lines linking adjoining rooms indicating access between rooms where that was clear during recording. If there is no direct access between rooms, for example where room access is via a hall or passageway, then the linking lines meet adjacent to the room. The main entrance to a structure is identified by the letter 'E' beside an arrow to show the entry point or in some cases more than one entry. Bathrooms are indicated with a 'B', kitchens (identified by a concrete stove) with a 'K' and 'S' indicates a service facility that might include kitchen and toilet facilities, or simply rooms with no identified function, but assumed to be domestic staff accommodation (referred to as 'boys rooms' by BMNP staff). Where the service facility is attached to the main house a line links it, if separate it is not shown joined by a line. This is a simple method for identifying patterns by showing a series of structures side-by-side on a page. This system of graphical representation of eighteen villas in OBM is employed in Chapter 8-2.

## **5-9 Summary**

The historical sources for Bạch Mã Mountain are limited, although they fall into a series of complementary categories. There are two written descriptions, one from 1939 and one from 1943, a relatively comprehensive cadastral map and a copy of the police regulations. These contemporary documentary sources are complemented by the memories of a dozen Vietnamese witnesses who all have different personal

experiences and perspectives. For the wider perspective of OBM within its historical context documentary sources are limited, partly because the region was peripheral to the main political centres, partly because a large number of documents were lost in three decades of war. The regional historical record is also constrained because of the nature of modern Vietnamese historiography.

Bach Mã evidences a range of archaeological resources that provide measurable data that can enhance our understanding of OBM. The local environment contributes its own constraints and challenges on collecting that data. The greatest potential for documenting and understanding OBM is to explore each aspect of the evidence and to incorporate them into a common narrative. Chapter 6 begins by detailing the history of Bach Mã plateau from the documentary sources described in this chapter, and the oral history of the Vietnamese people who knew it.

## **Chapter 6 History of the Bạch Mã Mountain plateau**

### **6-1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the history of Bạch Mã Mountain plateau. This history has been written from local documents, that were translated from French or Vietnamese, and oral history interviews with people who knew OBM in the 1940s and later. The nature of these sources was discussed in Chapter 5-2. This is not intended to be a definitive history of OBM for which access to archival documents would have been essential. It is intended to be as detailed as possible to allow the physical development of the hill station to be contextualised. The chapter begins with a brief comparison of the history and environment of Bạch Mã and Bana Hill Stations because they are very close to each other geographically, and photographs taken in Bana in the 1920s reflect the situation in Bạch Mã. Following that discussion a more detailed history of OBM will be presented from the limited documentary and oral history evidence available.

One of the most important sources of information about OBM is the planning map, OBM Map 1, which formed the basis of the field survey and was introduced in Chapter 5-3. A more detailed analysis of this map presented here provides a description of the landscape at the summit plateau and an overview of the development of OBM and its community. Names of residents or lot owners are included on the map and this provides the foundation for an impression of the individuals who made up the community of OBM. This community also included Vietnamese people from a range of backgrounds and the oral histories of several people from Cầu Hai Village and from Huế provide the basis for the next section that looks at memories of life in OBM. Two, and possibly three, youth camps were located at OBM during the early 1940s. The influence of these on many of the young Vietnamese people who attended was that it instilled a sense of nationality and cultural pride that underpinned the Vietnamese resistance in the First Indochina War against the French beginning in 1946. The Bạch Mã Boy Scouts' training camp occupied a central place in the landscape of the hill station and played a significant role in the later struggle for national independence. As such, the local history of the Scouting movement and their training camp in Bạch Mã forms the final part of this chapter as an example of the role of youth training in Indochina in the early 1940s.

## 6-2 *Bach Mã and Bana Hill Stations*

Bach Mã and Bana Hill Stations are so close that it is possible to see one from the other; about twenty-five kilometres in a direct line. Despite their proximity, Bach Mã and Bana have quite distinct environments. As well, Bana's development dates from the beginning of the twentieth century, and in general the two hill stations served different communities, Huế and Tourane respectively. But the correspondence in their later development makes a brief comparison useful. Of particular value are photographs available for Bana from the 1920s showing building construction types and transport to the hill station that reflect conditions in nearby Bach Mã a decade later.

The initiative to develop a climate retreat, or *station d'altitude*, at Bana dates to the beginning of the twentieth century and follows Governor-General Doumer's proposal to develop the site at Đà Lạt to serve the French population at Saigon. Doumer also initiated a series of surveys to identify a highland site within 150 kilometres of Tourane and Huế to service the French in Central Vietnam (Cossierat, 1924:353; I.D.E.O., 1935). Bana was located at the summit of Mount Chúa about twenty-eight kilometres west of Tourane and provided a view directly across the city as well as the Bay of Tourane, a significant port in Central Vietnam, although limited by shallow water. Captain Debay of the Colonial Infantry in Tourane had undertaken extensive explorations of the mountains out of Tourane. In a report to Doumer in 1901 regarding the potential for a hill station that might service Tourane and Huế, he mentioned a small structure already at Bana where he and his colleagues had spent a night during a survey. This may have been a lookout over the Bay of Tourane (Cossierat, 1924:353).

Mount Chúa rises to an altitude of 1487masl, and so provides similar climatic benefits as Bach Mã in relation to altitude. Mount Chúa is about twenty-five kilometres inland from the coast, while Bach Mã Mountain overlooks a coastal plain only three kilometres wide. There are two other geographical factors that distinguish the two hill stations. Firstly, Bach Mã is north of the Hải Vân Pass while Bana is south. The Hải Vân Pass is a 500 metre high geographical boundary between north and south Vietnam that has a critical influence on weather; areas to the north are significantly wetter and cooler than those to the south. Bana therefore has a significantly drier and

warmer climate than Bạch Mã (Thân Trọng Ninh, 2006-7). Secondly, the summit of Mount Chúa only has a minimal plateau area. Construction opportunities at Bana are restricted to a series of ridgelines, thereby limiting the extent of development. In contrast, Bạch Mã has a substantial plateau between 1200masl and 1450masl that provided extensive opportunities for development, not only for sanatoria and private dwellings, but is also for cool climate horticulture.

By 1924 there were almost twenty structures at Bana, most of a temporary nature. Figure 6-1 shows several structures constructed by the Forestry Service in Bana that use bamboo or rattan canes and woven palm leaves for roofing and walls. These are no doubt similar to the first structures at Bạch Mã before the access road was established.



Planche CXX. — Bana : le Service Forestier. (Cliché Gayet-Laroche.)

**Figure 6- 1 Forestry Service Buildings in Bana in 1924, from Sallet (1924: 378)**

While Bana's development was constrained by the local terrain, Glerende nevertheless noted that by the late 1930s roads to the summit of both Bana and Bạch Mã were under construction and were expected to be completed by the end of the decade. Access to both hill stations before the completion of their access road was either by foot or by *chaise de porteurs* (see Figure 6-2). Both had extensive military camps, although the camp at Bana was located not far from the bottom of the

mountain at 300masl while the military camp at Bạch Mã was located on the plateau at about 1250masl (Glerende, 1939).



**Figure 6-2** This photo was taken by 'Casanova' in Bana in 1924 showing a *chaise* heading for the summit. *Chaise de porteurs* was the only transport to the summit at OBM until the road opened in 1938, but travel by *chaise* continued to remain popular.

Over the last two decades Bana has attracted significant tourism investment. Several modern hotels provide accommodation. Colonial style architecture has not been as significant a theme in redevelopment in Bana as it has in Bạch Mã. A relatively large Buddhist temple is a significant attraction for local visitors to Bana. Furthermore, the ridge-top nature of the tourism development results in a perception of a landscape much less dominated by forest than that at Bạch Mã. The road to the summit of Mount Chúa has been upgraded to provide secure access, and a cable-car from about 1000masl offers alternative access to the summit. A few ruins of colonial buildings accessible near the summit indicate a similar development history for Bana and Bạch Mã from the late 1930s, and equivalent war damage suggests a similar postcolonial history.



That these two hill stations should be located so close together is a consequence of three main geographical factors. Huế and Tourane were the two main French population centres in Annam, located just 100 kilometres apart. Bana was originally expected to serve both communities, but the necessity to cross the Hải Vân Pass made travel from Huế relatively difficult. Finally, the landscape of Bana limited the extent and nature of development possible. Once the plateau at Bạch Mã was surveyed it was recognised as a potential site for a large hospital, agricultural development, as well as extensive private development. The population of Tourane had the same problem of access to Bạch Mã across the Hải Vân Pass, so continued the development of Bana on a more limited scale.

### **6-3 Documented history of Bạch Mã - Hai Van**

While Bạch Mã Mountain did not figure in the published record of the region until the hill station was established, the area was recognised for its natural heritage in 1925 with a proposal to create a national park of 50,000 hectares to preserve the unique forests in the Bạch Mã - Hải Vân area (Anon., 2001:12; Eve, 1996:13). Before the establishment of the hill station there are only passing references to the historical exploitation of Bạch Mã by ethnic minority people, the mountain people or montagnards, usually associated with the Central Highlands of Vietnam. Cleary (2005:269) argued that one of the main rationales for establishing forest reserves in French Indochina was to control the use of forests by shifting agriculturalists. There were two references in the oral histories to the mountain people who nowadays live in the buffer zones to the north and west of BMNP. Bà Bờ referred to the local ethnic minority people coming out of the forest once or twice a year to trade corn in the village (Bờ, 2006b). Ông Hồng referred to a minority village close to Bạch Mã, 'a cool and beautiful place' (Ông Hồng & Ông Châu, 2006). The 1990 management plan for BMNP noted that when the US military became involved in Bạch Mã in 1966, they resettled the minority Thuong people to a strategic village (Anon., 1990:17). It might be assumed, therefore, that the summit plateau of Bạch Mã Mountain had an earlier period of occupation before the French arrived, possibly by the local montagnards. It is, however, unlikely that any transitory use of the forest by shifting cultivators in earlier times has left any identifiable archaeological trace.

Đính (2002:18) noted that the first documented reference to Bạch Mã, or at least the Bạch Mã – Hải Vân area, seems to have been in an early Vietnamese historical work, *Đại nam nhất thống chí* in which Nguyễn Phúc Chu (1691 – 1725) composed a poem while travelling south of Huế. It is unlikely that Chu went to the top of Bạch Mã Mountain, however the verse gives a lovely period impression of the mountain environment in this area.

**Spring Cloud on Mountain Pass**

*This perilous peak is in Vietnam,  
It's feature is like the way in Shu,  
On the three great peaks only cloud can be seen,  
Hardly know I am up high in heaven,  
Without stream but clothes become wet because of the dew,  
Without snow but my face feels frozen with coldness,  
Wind from the sea wishes to turn into rain and dew,  
For the blooming growth of the immense mulberry fields.*

Due to the narrowness of the coastal plain between Bạch Mã and Hải Vân, and the rugged mountain terrain to the west, the Hải Vân Pass provided the main land route between north and south Vietnam. The strategic significance of the area is highlighted in *Đại nam nhất thống chí* when it referred to a battle between Nguyễn Văn Trường and the Tây Sơn General Lê Văn An in the early days of the Nguyễn dynasty (early nineteenth century) at Phú Gia Pass just north of Lăng Cô and Hải Vân. Another battle between the Nguyễn dynasty and Tây Sơn General Khẩu Định took place at Cao Đồi, the former name of Cầu Hai, in the shadow of Bạch Mã Mountain. Đính also noted that it was during the reign of Emperor Minh Mạng (1820 – 1841) that a gate and stele were erected on Hải Vân Pass. Today these are important elements in the rich cultural heritage of Thừa Thiên - Huế Province (Đính, 2002:18).

The French arrived in Bạch Mã in 1932 and under the direction of the Chief Engineer of the Department of Bridges and Roads in Annam, Michel Girard, surveyed the summit plateau on 28 and 29 July and found the area suitable for a hill station (Anon., 1943:14) (see Figure 6.3). By 1933 the Public Works Department of Annam had constructed a ‘moderate wooden cottage’ for the use of holiday makers and in 1934 a

path to the summit had been made suitable for sedan chairs (*chaises à porteurs*) to reach the summit (Anon., 1943) (see Figure 6.2). A tourist map from 1935 mentioned that access to the foot of the mountain was possible by motor vehicle and to ascend the mountain by *chaise* took two and a half hours (I.D.E.O., 1935). The *chaise* could be booked through the village chief, Ly Thuong, in Cao Đồi Village (I.D.E.O., 1935). In 1934 several areas in the Bạch Mã - Hải Vân area were classified as forest reserves (Eve, 1996:13).



**Figure 6- 3** A plaque commemorating Girard's survey in July 1932, erected in 1942 and located opposite his villa near the summit of Bạch Mã Mountain. The text reads 'Bach-Ma station d'altitude découverte le 28 Juillet 1932 par M. Girard Ingenieur Chef Des T. P.', in translation - 'Bach-Ma hill station discovered 28 July 1932 by M Girard chief engineer, of the Department of Public Works.

By 1936 the Vietnamese economy was recovering after the effects of the early 1930s global financial crisis, and the introduction of the Popular Front government in France under Leon Blum had stimulated investment and development in Vietnam. At that time there were seventeen wooden houses located along the northern ridges of Bạch Mã Mountain (Anon., 1943:14) even though there was still only access to the summit plateau by footpath. In 1937 a road was opened to the 500masl point (Anon., 1943). This is probably at the point where today there is a small parking area nearby the beginning of the current Pheasant Walking Trail at the eight kilometres mark (distances are measured from the road junction with National Highway One in Cầu Hai village. The distance to Bạch Mã summit is over eighteen kilometres by road but

only about three kilometres in a direct line). The article *Indochine* (Anon., 1943) stated that the road to the summit was completed in 1938, however, Glerende (1939:217) suggested that the road ended at the 700masl point at Bạch Mã, where there was a car park and shelter for vehicles. The road to Bạch Mã summit has no place past the eight kilometre point (500masl) where it is suitable for a car park and shelter, and certainly at the 700masl level near the ten and eleven kilometres points, the mountain slope is extremely steep and unstable. It seems possible that Glerende had visited Bạch Mã some time before the publication of the article. Glerende noted that the Resident of Thừa Thiên Province was committed to open the road to the summit by the end of 1939. He (1939:217) described the hill station as ‘cottages and a chapel ... scattered along the road’. He also noted that in the spring of 1939 the military had completed a survey and were clearing an area for a military camp at 1200masl. It seems likely that the *Indochine* article date for completion of the road is correct because the author went on to provide more detail about the development of OBM.

The *Indochine* article noted that after completion of the road to the summit plateau in 1938 development of OBM quickened and that forty new villas were completed. Then in 1942, development growth reached a peak with forty-five new cottages completed. By 1943 the Pacific War had created shortages in many things, but despite the difficulty in obtaining building materials, another thirty villas were completed in 1943 to give a total of 130 buildings. Two hotels with six and fifteen rooms, open from May to mid-September, were also constructed by the end of 1943. There was a swimming pool and tennis court, a post office and telegraph office. A regular car service operated from Huế. The article noted that the summit plateau had a ‘surface of 900’ hectares (following in Section 6-4 it is noted that the plateau has an area of approximately 296 hectares) within which only 300 plots had been made available for development, affecting only one tenth of the area and suggesting that protection of the forested vegetation was an important consideration in the development of OBM. There were several walking trails, including one that went to the Grande Cascade, a spectacular 300 metre high waterfall that today is probably the most popular scenic attraction for visitors to the summit of Bạch Mã Mountain. The article concluded that Bạch Mã was one of the most beautiful recreation locations in French Indochina (Anon., 1943:17). Elsewhere it is noted that in 1941 Leopold

Cadiere had proposed that Bạch Mã should be protected as a nature reserve (Anon., 2001:12). Cadiere, a missionary father and head of the *Missions Étrangères de Paris* had been in Annam since 1895 and was a prominent colonial figure in Huế, a founder and editor of the journal *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Huế* (BAVH) throughout its publication history, and was a dedicated student of Vietnamese culture (Cooke, 1991:286). There is no record that Cadiere owned a villa at OBM, but three religious orders were represented: R.P. Franciscains, Rédemptorists and the Sisters of Jeanne d'Arc.

The main record of the end of OBM or events that involved Bạch Mã in 1945 comes from the oral histories. In March 1945, the Japanese took control of the country in a *coup de force* and the French community in Huế were confined until the end of the war (Thân Trọng Ninh, 2006). The oral history of Bà Bờ suggested that there were French people in OBM in March 1945, but that they ran away when the Japanese seized control and many died at 'Satadour' (a stream) on their way to Truối village on the lower northeast slopes of Bạch Mã Mountain. It is not clear from the transcript the cause of death or the numbers involved, but it is the only reference to suggest that there were French people in OBM at the time who tried to escape. A similar event occurred in Tam Đảo where several hundred French people were taking refuge in March 1945, and twenty escaped into the forest and made their way across the Chinese border with the help of the Việt Minh (Marr, 1995:233-4). Bà Bờ said that after the March 1945 coup the Japanese sent many people to Bạch Mã. She referred specifically to a Buddhist nun who went to the temple in Bạch Mã, but Bà Bờ said 'they are all dead now' which suggests that most of those sent were Vietnamese and known to her. She says that only the Japanese visited after March 1945 (Bờ, 2006b). After the French reoccupied Huế in 1946 to try to re-establish their colonial enterprise, fighting broke out between the French and Việt Minh and travel outside Huế became unsafe (Thân Trọng Ninh, 2006). Bạch Mã was never reoccupied by the French.

From the BMNP staff historical notes (Anon., nd-a, nd-b) it seems possible that the Boy Scout movement continued to use the training camp in Bạch Mã periodically, but this is uncertain. Bach Văn Quế who was Camp Commissioner from 1941 to 1944 mentioned that training continued in 1945 during the Japanese period (Quế, 2007), but

from 1946 to 1954 many Scouts and Scout leaders were occupied in fighting the French, the movement had been dissolved and the Boy Scouts' camp abandoned (Tuân, 2007). Bạch Mã may have been used as a refuge for Việt Minh fighters during the war against the French (Anon., 1990:17), and certainly there was a battle between the French and Việt Minh south of Huế that extended to Cầu Hai on 26 July 1951 (Campaign map in Hồ Chí Minh Museum, Huế). This seems to be supported by a copy of a letter dated 2 April 1953 to J.E. Vidal, a property owner in OBM (Lot 119), from the office *Haut Commissariat De France en Indochine, Direction des Dommages de Guerre* (High Commissioner of France in Indochina, Management of War Damages) that provided an assessment of war damage from air photographs of J.E. Vidal's property in Bạch Mã. The property appeared to be intact at that time, but the completion of an assessment suggests that fighting occurred nearby.

After 1954 and the division of the country into the North and South at the seventeenth parallel, Thừa Thiên Province became part of the Republic of Vietnam under the rule of President Ngô Đình Diệm in Saigon, a regime supported by the US but infamous for its greed and corruption (Vien, 1993:303). Diệm's brother, Ngô Đình Cẩn, also known as 'Mr Chewing Tobacco', lived in Huế looking after the family matriarch. According to Ky (2002:71-2):

Within a few years of Diem's ascent to power, Can was the uncrowned king of Annam, the supreme fixer. He held no office, answered to no one but his brother, and lived in a huge, ostentatious home in Hue more suitable for royalty.

It seems that Cẩn's interests extended to Bạch Mã. In the BMNP staff historical notes (Anon., nd-a:1) his involvement is described as follows:

Ngô Đình Cẩn played the whore and liked to appropriate property. As a consequence, Bạch Mã fell into the hands of Cẩn and his henchmen. With a policy which herded people into villages, Cẩn made people come to this area for cultivation. However, this plan failed due to inauspicious travel conditions and lack of arable land.

Cẩn apparently also built and repaired some guesthouses in Bạch Mã in order to welcome supreme officials and Ngô's family (Anon., nd-b:2). Bà Bờ mentioned that the present day BMNP plateau restaurant and guest house (called Bảo An on the planning map of OBM discussed in Section 6-4) was redeveloped in a French style in

the 1990s but was first built in 1957 or 1958. The BMNP historical notes suggest that visitors continued to visit Bạch Mã during the early 1960s.

In 1962 there was another proposal to create a national park covering 78,000 hectares in the Bạch Mã - Hải Vân region (Đính, 2002). In fact Eve (1996:14) noted that the government of South Vietnam established a national park in 1962. The Second Indochina War, however, soon started to impact Bạch Mã. A former US soldier visiting Bạch Mã in 2006 said that he had been part of the first US force to enter Bạch Mã in 1965 (pers. com. Chuck 19/7/2006)... Bombing of Bạch Mã by the US began in 1966 (Anon., 1990:17), and in July 1969 a major US offensive was launched to clear the NVA from the mountain (Higle, 1969). Control of the summit ridges continued to be contested by NVA and US forces until the US forces left in 1973. On 12 October 1973 the NVA overran a small ARVN force occupying the Bạch Mã summit fire-base (Anon., 1973). During the Second Indochina War extensive damage was done to surviving villas and the forest was devastated by the spraying of defoliants. Bạch Mã is not mentioned in the *Facts on File* series (Millet, 1974) that attempted to record all documented battles. An operational report from 1969 (101st Airborne, 1969) described the action in Bạch Mã in July as part of a wider operation that included the March Hamburger Hill battle, Operation Kentucky Jumper, intended to interdict and disrupt NVA supply routes. The same report showed that Phú Bài District, incorporating Bạch Mã, consistently reported the greatest NVA activity in the province during the reporting period, the three months ending 31 July 1969.

After reunification of Vietnam in April 1975 there were some further attempts at agricultural activity in Bạch Mã. Apparently a seedling company tried to propagate seed vegetables and cold climate crops, but this venture was unsuccessful. According to BMNP staff historical notes (Anon., nd-a:2), it was after reunification and ‘unclear management’ that local people salvaged building materials from the old villas and began to exploit the natural resources of the forest. (My interpretation of the material fabric suggests this occurred earlier, see Chapter 8-1-6.) Local people tell stories of collecting orchids and trapping birds during the period leading up to the establishment of BMNP in 1991. Another man mentioned travelling up to salvage material from a crashed US helicopter, a venture that led to disaster for some when the fuel tanks exploded. In 1988 people from the Dam Huong region to the west of Bạch Mã

Mountain were taking timber from the forest. In Nam Truối to the northeast about eighty people collected firewood and in Huong Loc to the south of Bạch Mã, up to forty cubic metres of firewood was removed from the forest every day. In addition hunters were taking gibbon and monkeys for bone glue, as well as deer and wild pig for meat (Anon., 1990:18).

#### **6-4 The Station d'Altitude Nui Bạch Mã Plan d'Amenagement map**

The *Station d'Altitude Nui Bạch Mã Plan d'Amenagement* map is one of the key pieces of evidence of the development of OBM. This map is the only available evidence of the management plan for OBM. The map and a copy of the police regulations (*Règlement De Police du Centre - Urbain de Bach Ma*, 1939) are the only official documents relating to OBM that were available for this study. Harley (1992:232, 237) suggested that in the context of a map as text, following Foucault's assertion that texts are anchored in socio-political realities of their time, maps can be considered a commentary on the social structure of their time. It is worth, therefore, considering the background and context of the OBM map as it formed a central support for the field-work and analysis of the site.

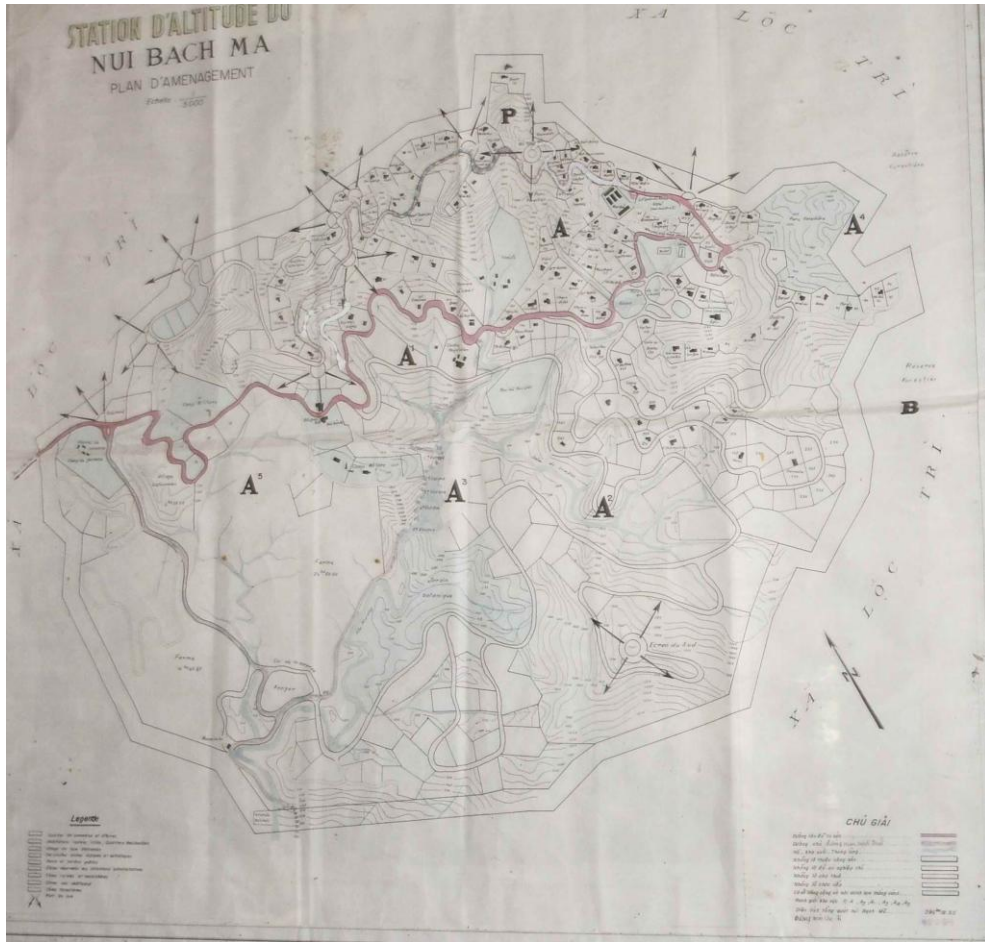
Modern cartography, which includes the colonial mapping undertaken by the French in Indochina, is based on scientific techniques, and aims to produce representations of landscape that are “impartial”, “objective”, “scientific” and “true” (Harley, 1992:231). Harley (1992:232) argued that maps are never value free, however, and by deconstructing the map, by breaking the ‘assumed link between reality and representation’ then even scientific maps become products ‘not only of “geometry and reason” but also of the norms and values of the social tradition’.

A map can carry in its image such symbolism as may be associated with the particular area, geographic feature, city, or place which it represents. It is often on this symbolic level that political power is most effectively reproduced, communicated and experienced through maps... [T]he quest for truth was not an objective and neutral activity but was intimately related to the ‘will to power’ of the truth seeker. Knowledge was thus a form of power, a way of presenting one’s own values in the guise of scientific disinterestedness... [T]he surveyor ... replicates not just the ‘environment’ in some abstract sense but equally the territorial imperatives of the particular political system. (Harley, 1988:281).

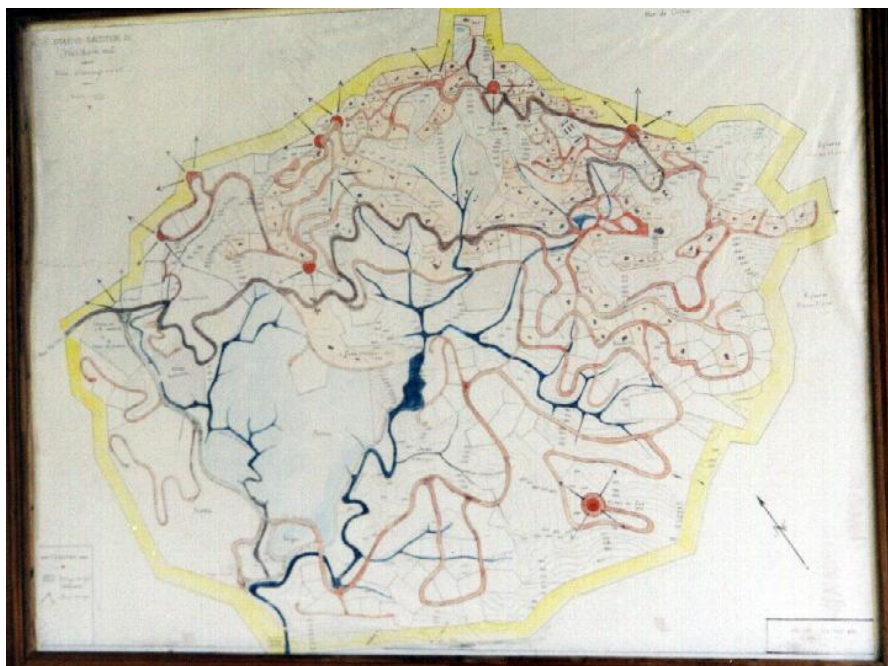


Harley (1988:282) went on to note that maps were weapons of imperialism and that maps ‘regularly supported the execution of territorial power... Indeed, the graphic nature of the map gave imperial users an arbitrary power that was easily divorced from the social responsibilities and consequences of its exercise’. But the power of maps was not exercised over individuals but over knowledge of the world (Harley, 1992:245).

Maps are produced by someone and maps have users; they are made for a purpose. The title of the map of OBM, *Station d’Altitude Nui Bach Mã Plan d’Amenagement*, indicates that this map was part of a management plan and was used in the planning and management of OBM. The development shown on the map (about 120 houses are shown) compared to the *Indochine* article (Anon., 1943) suggests the base map of OBM was originally produced *circa* 1943. There are at least three versions of the map, only two of which are considered here as the third contributes no new information (see Map 6-1 and Map 6-2). The original of the main map used here is on display at the BMNP Visitors Centre and is referred to here as OBM Map1. OBM Map 2 is held in the BMNP office at the summit guesthouse and is essentially the same as OBM Map 1, but is shown here because the drainage lines and access roads are highlighted and show the landform of the summit plateau more clearly.



Map 6-1 OBM Map 1 showing main access road, lot numbers and names, some Vietnamese additions including a Vietnamese legend.



Map 6-2 OBM Map 2 clearly showing drainage lines and access roads.

Both maps have been produced from a basic landscape map showing drainage lines, contours and access roads with cadastral information overlaid that includes building lots developed as well as those available for development. Lots already developed include the names of the lot owner for ninety-four lots. The script and legends are slightly different on each map showing that the maps were produced individually. Both maps include French and Vietnamese names but OBM Map 1 includes Vietnamese script in several places that appears to be written by another hand.

#### **6-4-1 Landforms of the summit plateau**

OBM Map 1 includes a relatively detailed record of the landscape using contours marked at intervals of ten metres, showing altitude. The map only details the summit plateau of Bạch Mã Mountain. It shows that there are four main peaks to the mountain. Three of these are in the north and northeast, connected by a ridge running west and southeast from *Belvedere*, or *Đồi Vọng Hải* as it appears on OBM Map 1, which reaches 1450masl. This makes the northeast and northwest boundaries the highest parts of the plateau. In the southeast a fourth peak, *Ecran du Sud* (Southern Screen) reaches 1320masl. Most drainage lines, clearly marked on OBM Map 2, drain to the centre of the plateau where they join just above the feature known as the Five Lakes (*Vasques*), and then flow to the southwest. Another stream that drains the western portion of the plateau joins the main stream before leaving the plateau via the Rhododendron Waterfall (*Grande Cascade*, *Thác Đổ Quyên*), that falls at least 300 metres and flows on to join the Perfume River in Huế (Kéo, 2001:68).

The northern half of the plateau is marked by a series of spurs running off the main northeast and northwest ridges, divided by moderately steep gullies, across which most of the residential development occurs. The southwest and western part of the plateau is of relatively low relief, and is shown on the map allocated to farming (thirty-eight hectares), and an orchard (*Verger*). Conservation areas are shown around the third peak in the northeast, the Forest Park (*Parc Forestiere*), and in the south around the fourth peak, the Southern Screen (*Ecran du Sud*). The total plateau area is about 300 hectares, of which about 110 hectares are allocated for residential development.

### 6-4-2 Layout of OBM with reference to OBM Map 1 – urban zoning

Map 1 contains two legends, one in Vietnamese and one in French. The French legend on the bottom left hand side of the map lists ten features that were indicated by colour on the original, although these colours are not reproduced on the copies. The French legend appears in the bottom left-hand corner of the map sheet and in translation lists:

- Quarter of commerce and business
- Detached habitations, villas, and residential quarters
- Vietnamese village
- Areas where construction is encumbered for logistical and/or aesthetic reasons
- Parks and gardens
- Administrative zones
- Rural and market garden zones
- Areas unavailable for development
- Forest zones
- View points

In the bottom right-hand corner of the map sheet, the Vietnamese legend also refers to non-reproduced colour coding and in translation lists:

- Roads
- Walking trails
- Water bodies, streams
- Plots for rent
- Boundary zones P A A<sub>1-5</sub>
- Area 296ha

OBM Map 1 includes a feature that does not appear on OBM Map 2; a series of large zoning letters, P, A, A<sub>1-5</sub>, and B. These zones are referred to only in the Vietnamese legend, and do not appear to relate to the urban development, but rather appear evenly across the map covering areas inside and outside the boundary of OBM. P appears just north of the main summit overlooking Cầu Hai village to the east and the northeast. This was *Belvedere* during the French period, one of the four main peaks, and later the main helicopter landing area and ‘fire base’ during the military occupation of Bạch Mã Mountain in the 1960s. Zone A is near the central residential area, while Zones A1 and A5 are located west of A, in undeveloped land south of the

main access road. A3 and A2 are also in largely undeveloped areas south of the access road. A4 is located east of A, and right on the OBM boundary. One potential explanation is that this map was used during the occupation of OBM by Ngô Đình Cẩn as part of his entrepreneurial approach towards Bạch Mã in the late 1950s, suggested by the Vietnamese language additions to the map (Anonymous, nd-a).

For the purposes of this study, the map was divided into seven zones, focusing on the residential areas (see discussion in Chapter 5). Table 6-1 shows the number of lots shown developed and undeveloped on OBM Map 1, in each residential analytical zone.

**Table 6-1. Numbers of developed and undeveloped plots shown on map**

Analytical zone	Developed plots	Total lots	% developed
North-western	18	20	90
Northern	15	17	88.2
North-eastern	12	17	70.6
Central	22	27	81.5
Eastern	7	12	58.3
Western	19	30	63.3
Southern	25	62	40.3

The analytical zones were placed only around areas that show residential development, rather than all available lots. Field survey and the experience of BMNP staff suggests that there was no development outside the main areas indicated on the map. The rate of lot allocation suggests that there was considerable interest in selecting lots in the early 1940s. Table 6-1 indicates that the northern, northwest, northeast and central zones have very high percentages of developed lots. These four zones cluster along the main ridges along the northwest and northeast ridges of the summit plateau, and are closest to the main commercial facilities, the Post Office, market, hotels, store, sports areas and park.

Ninety-four named plots are shown in relation to analytical residential zones in Table 6-2. They are divided into four categories: French family names; French institutions; Vietnamese individuals; and, Vietnamese institutions. French institutions include commercial ventures such as the hotels and café as well as villas in the name of an institution such as *chemin de fer* (railways) and includes Chaffenjon (Lot 45 NER) identified in the oral history as a shop. The Vietnamese institutions include two

military and/or police stations, as well as the Buddhist temple in the western zone, and the Bang Tả building in the NWR zone.

**Table 6-2 Plot owner nationality and type according to residential zone**

Zone	French private	French institutions	Vietnamese private	Vietnamese institutions	Total
NWR	7	6	2	1	16
NR	7	2	4	-	13
NER	5	6	-	-	11
CR	14	2	3	-	19
ER	4	2	1	-	7
WR	8	1	3	1	13
SR	11	3	1	-	11
Total	56	22	10	2	94

The northwest zone (NWR) has a large number of government villas, *Traveaux Publics* (Public Works), *Delegation Administration*, *Résidence Supérieur*, although a number of private French dwellings also occur along this ridge, including M. Cosserrat and M. Imbert, both prominent figures in the French community in Huế. Mr Thân Trọng Ninh said that access to this area was restricted in the 1940s because of the presence of government villas so that he rarely visited this part of OBM (Thân Trọng Ninh, 2006-7). The *Résidence Supérieur* close to *Belvedere* is sometimes referred to by tourist guides as the residence of Emperor Bảo Đại, however, although he may have visited Bạch Mã, the Emperor built his summer residence in Đà Lạt because he found the imperial setting in Huế too stifling (Jennings, 2003:179). The ridgeline housing sites along this northwest ridge provide spectacular views to the north, as far as Huế on a clear day. Altitudes range from 1370masl to 1440masl. It appears likely that this is the administrative zone listed in the legend.

Table 6-2 shows six institutional structures in the NER. Most of these are commercial ventures and, combined with the market, represent the commercial centre of OBM. The market, on the boundary between NER and CR is probably the Bả Sanh market referred to in the oral history discussed later in this chapter. The northern residential area is distinctive for the high number of Vietnamese plot owners. Four of the ten ridge-top sites have Vietnamese names. Vietnamese residents are shown in all residential areas except the NER, the commercial centre. A few institutional sites are located in the other zones.

In Bana development was initiated by institutional development, with private investors first arriving in 1919. Emile Morin built the first hotel in Bana in the mid-1920s and later also built in a prominent position in OBM (Cosserat, 1924). The same type of development is likely to have occurred in OBM. Fourteen of the twenty-two French institutional sites (63.6%) are located along the northern ridges. Another feature of OBM's development shown on the planning map is that there are few undeveloped lots in the northern (NWR, NR, NER) and central residential areas. Most undeveloped lots are in the south and west which suggests that the higher altitude, ridgeline sites were most popular and occupied first while the southern and western areas were still being taken up in 1943.

Details for a few of the individual residents of OBM came to light during the field work, but was not a focus of this study. The next section provides a very brief overview of the nature of the community of landowners based on the oral history and local information.

### **6-5 *The landowners in OBM***

The French colonialists from Hué were the main contributors to the development of OBM. Some of the French inhabitants in Hué were long-term residents. For example, M. H. Cosserat and L. Sogny, who owned villas in Bạch Mã had been in Hué for several decades by the time that Bạch Mã was abandoned in 1945. Cooke (1991) has written about the character of the French community in Hué leading up to 1930, and mentions Cosserat and Sogny who were both prominent members.

The French population in Annam was distinctive in Indochina because of its small size and relative isolation. It was concentrated in three main urban centres, Tourane, Hué and Vinh, the capital of Thanh Hoá Province in northern Annam. Up to the mid 1920s it was dominated by single men. A significant increase in the population in the 1920s included many women and children as the colonists tried to establish 'a more normal family life than their predecessors' (Cooke, 1991:279). The small French population reflected the lack of colonial development in Annam, and this is reflected in their professional backgrounds. Cooke (1991:278) quoted the 1929 census figures in which just over half the French population of Annam worked in the colonial administration. The majority of them were in low status positions in customs, public

works and postal services. Senior administrators made up a very small 14.5 per cent of government officials compared to thirty-five per cent on average in the other *pays*. Outside the administration the largest census categories were in agriculture, hunting and fishing (twenty-nine per cent) and the Church (twenty-seven per cent) with only fifteen per cent employed in commerce. This dominance of men from the administration and Church, both inherently hierarchical, led to seniority and official position conferring social status among the colonial elite (Cooke, 1991:281).

In the early decades of the twentieth century officials especially became involved in understanding Annamite elite culture ‘in order to contain or neutralise the potentially perilous force of tradition in Annam’ (Cooke, 1991:281). It was this that led to the establishment in 1913 of the association *Amis du Vieux Hué* (AVH) which published the bulletin (BAVH) until 1944. The association fostered the development of close relationships between the French and Vietnamese elites of Hué, the latter group forming thirty to forty per cent of the membership of the AVH within a decade of its origin, and a significant proportion of that group coming from the Vietnamese royal family. Cooke (1991:285) suggested that the Vietnamese understood ‘the value of cultivating multi-stranded relations with influential Frenchmen’ and that furthermore, they were flattered by the interest of the French.

Thân Trọng Ninh in Hué remembered a number of the French who owned lots in OBM. Cosserat was a professor at the Khái Định Secondary school in Hué, as well as a businessman (Thân Trọng Ninh, 2006-7). He was a passionate student of Vietnamese history and culture and was an associate and regular contributor to BAVH from 1914 -1943. Several other teachers at Khái Định also established villas in Bạch Mã, including Jean Conti, (Agronomy teacher, NWR Lot 26), Giamanchi (vice director, NER Lot 44), Jules Vidal (Botany, CR Lot 119), Richard (English SR) and Griffon (SR Lot 136). Khái Định was an elite French residential (boarding) school that today retains its status as Hué’s first, highest standard, secondary school (now called the Quốc Học School). Its fame today is enhanced because its former students included Hồ Chí Minh and Võ Nguyên Giáp, the two most significant names in the twentieth century struggle for Vietnamese independence. The Inspector of Schools for Annam, Eugene Le Bris, also built a distinctive stone villa on the northwest ridge (Lot 73-4). L. Sogny was Inspector of the *Garde Indigène* in 1914 (BAVH 1914 (1):100), but later head of the *Sûrité* in the 1940s. Sogny ‘spoke Vietnamese like a



Vietnamese' (Ninh interview 2007) and was concerned at the superficial understanding and adoption of western cultural habits by the Vietnamese (Cooke, 1991:436). His concrete house was in the southern residential area at Lot 208.

A number of residences were also constructed for prominent French government ministers. Several were located along the northwest ridge, and most have now been completely destroyed or extensively damaged as a result of the contest for control of the strategic north, northeast and northwest ridges during the Second Indochina War. The *Résidence Supérieure* was an official residence for the Governor of Annam. The *Delegation Administration* building serviced the representative of the Imperial Government in Huế, responsible for liaising with the French Governor-General in Hanoi (Thân Trọng Ninh, 2006 - 2007). As well as government members, there were French professionals, such as Doctors Hasle (lot 125, CR), Mathieu (lot 225, SR) and Bourgue Dor (lot 216, SR). M. Imbert (lot 28, NWR) was a pharmacist who owned the largest French pharmacy in Huế.

As well as the French residents at OBM there was also a contingent of wealthy and influential Vietnamese. On the northern ridge Hồ Đắc Khởi and Tôn Thất Quảng were members of influential royal or mandarin families in Huế. Two other members of the Hồ Đắc family built houses in OBM, although they both had influential positions in Tonkin. The Đồ Phong family were associated with the company involved in the construction of the Yunnan Fu railway. The Thân Trọng family was another of the great families of Huế, related to the royal family, and they had two houses and another two planned or under construction. Thân Trọng Ninh's father was a mandarin, or senior administrator, in the court of Emperor Bảo Đại. His uncle Thân Trọng Yên, was the provincial head of Bắc Ninh Province in Tonkin and owned a house (Lot 137) just near the entrance to the Scouts' camp in OBM. Another uncle, Thân Trọng Khôi (an agricultural engineer), had another house (Lot 35) and two other uncles, Thân Trọng Phat (railways engineer) and Thân Trọng Phước (doctor of medicine) held property also, although their houses may not have been completed in 1945.

The names of the many workers are not recorded, but a few old people still remember OBM and the following section discusses their memories of life in colonial times.

## **6-6 Memories of Old Bạch Mã**

Many of the staff of BMNP come from the local village of Cầu Hai and know old people in the village who had worked in OBM. During 2006, staff members with an interest in the history of the hill station, and with the support of Lê Quý Minh of BMNP's Visitors Centre, met and talked to several residents who had spent time in OBM in the 1940s. Interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and later translated on behalf of the author. I also met several people in Huế, Hanoi and Hồ Chí Minh City who had experience of OBM and recorded several interviews on tape.

The interviewees have a wide range of experience of OBM dating from 1938 when Mr Nguyễn Thúc Tuân, now living in Huế, undertook a Scout leaders' training course soon after the establishment of the Bạch Mã Scout Leaders' Training Camp. Mr Tuân's memories contribute to the discussion of the Vietnamese Boy Scouts in the next section. Also in Huế, Mr Thân Trọng Ninh talked about the nature of government under the French. Mr Ninh wrote the only known published account of daily life in OBM. Đồ Phong Cúc spoke about her visit as a young girl to one of the early villas at NR Lot 2. In the following discussion the village peoples' stories are told first, followed by the experiences of the wealthier Vietnamese. Transcripts for the village interviews appear in Appendix B.

Bà Bờ and Bà U were quite young women living in Cầu Hai village in the early 1940s. They both worked intermittently at OBM, sometimes as porters carrying material to the top of the mountain, but Bà U also sold goods in chợ Bàng Sanh, Bang Sanh Market in OBM. Ông Hồng worked as a porter carrying French visitors to the summit on a *chaise de porteurs* or palanquin. Hoàng Nhi Chắt of Cầu Hai worked as a caretaker for some of the French owned villas and his wife, Bà Thạo, worked as a porter. Ông Lê Hữu Con from Huế was involved in 1957 in the first reconstruction of the mountain access road.

For the Vietnamese working class who related their memories, a few consistent themes occur. Two interviewees referred to ethnic minority people living adjacent to, or nearby OBM. Ông Hồng referred to Cao Sách village beside Bạch Mã, and another far away in the forest that the French referred to as 'Ieron' minority village. These people collected honey and bees' wax. It may have been knowledge of these

villages that initiated the French exploration of the summit plateau of Bạch Mã Mountain (Ông Hồng, 2006). Bà Bờ also referred to the ethnic minority people who lived deep in the forests of Bạch Mã who would periodically come out of the forest to trade corn for salt. These people could catch wild elephants which they brought to the coastal villages where children who were sick or had scabies would pass under the belly of the animal as a cure (Bờ, 2006).

There were several references to the many local people who got work through the development of OBM. Bà Bờ referred to thousands of people coming to work in OBM. She sang a folk song from the period that mentioned ten villages as far as Phú Bài just south of Huế. These people were labourers, coolies, manual workers, working on the roads, building houses, mining rock for construction, and many people earned a living carrying building materials to the summit plateau; cement, bricks, roofing tiles and of course food. Timber and stone for building were sourced on the summit plateau and Ông Chắt remembers that they diverted a stream near the sixteen kilometre mark at the summit (Col Girard) so that they could get sand for the construction work (Chắt & Thảo, 2006).

The French usually brought people from Huế to work inside the houses, cooks, menservants and so on, although quite a few local people were employed as caretakers (Bờ, 2006; Ông Hồng, 2006). Caretakers sometimes looked after several houses. This was boring work according to Ông Chắt. Caretakers had to stay around the houses all the time and would be there most of the year even though the owners only visited during the summer season (Ông Hoàng Nhi Chắt, 2006). With all this work available, and often relatively well paying, especially carrying French people up by *chaise*, the local villages, Cầu Hai and Lộc Tri thrived during the war years (Chắt & Thảo, 2006).

Many people worked carrying goods to the summit and this was hard work. Often starting very early in the morning, 3:00 or 4:00 am, carrying twenty bricks, or roofing tiles or bags of cement on a bamboo pole over their shoulder. But there were always groups carrying together and that 'lightened' the load, because everyone sang and talked and laughed. Bà U remembered watching the people going up and wanting to be part of it. They had to travel in groups because there were wild animals. Bà Bờ remembered a group of bears that used to eat buds at kilometre ten. The people were

frightened that the bears would pick their eyes out. As well, there were always lots of monkeys along the way.

Bà U married in 1939. Her husband was conscripted by the military and he had to go to Nghệ An Province. Bà U spent time trying to make some money selling fish and fruit in Bàng Sanh Market in OBM. She remembers forty or fifty people going up to the market to sell fruit, vegetables, rice and fish (U, 2006). Several interviewees remembered the fish that some of the older women would cook and carry up to the market in terracotta pots (Bờ, 2006; Chắt & Thảo, 2006; U, 2006). It must have been a delicacy. Bà U spent six months working in OBM in 1942, but when her husband returned he wanted her to come home. The French did not come to Bang Sanh Market, only the house staff went there to buy food for the kitchen.

Bà Bờ also worked carrying cement and tiles to the summit. It was heavy work, but they had ways of lightening their loads. Some people would throw, maybe five tiles for example, from their load into a ditch which they could use themselves later. But when they got to the summit and had to hand over their materials, it was checked. They would send someone through first with the full number, say thirty tiles, and that person would secretly bring five tiles back to the group and give them to someone waiting to be checked in. Then the next person would do the same. That way everyone could get the full pay. With the heavy bags of cement they used to substitute ash from their kitchen fires. There was always some way of making life a little easier. Not many people spoke to the French because there was always a Vietnamese contractor in charge of organising workers and materials. But sometimes one of the girls would have an affair with one of the French visitors. The villagers used to make fun of such girls (Bờ, 2006). Some people would carry fresh food up for the French every day. They would meet the train from Huế at about 7:00 am before starting for the summit. They were very strong (Chắt & Thảo, 2006).

Vietnamese people from the village were not allowed to stay at OBM and there were not many places people could stay. There was the military camp and sometimes people would stay there with friends in the colonial army. The Vietnamese village at Col Girard on the plateau (shown on OBM Map 1) was still undeveloped at that time, just a few tents (Bờ, 2006).

Some people who got work as housekeepers or caretakers also grew vegetables in OBM. Cauliflowers were often mentioned, and sometimes cabbage, growing at kilometre sixteen or kilometre seventeen near where the restaurant is nowadays located. Tomatoes, carrots and potatoes were also mentioned by Ông Chắt, and a vegetable called 'kim cham' that Mr Nha would sell in Huế.

The king, Bảo Đại, occasionally visited OBM, but he never stayed very long (Bờ, 2006; Chắt & Thọ, 2006; U, 2006). He used to do a little hunting in Bạch Mã. Elephant and deer were popular with the hunters. Bà Bờ remembered a time when the king was passing through Cầu Hai Village and dropped his hat. Her father found a piece of jewellery that the king had lost but did not realise the value of it until the village headman came around and made him give it back.

Several people also remembered a few Japanese going up occasionally (Ông Hoàng Nhi Chắt, 2006). Usually they just passed through Cầu Hai village on the highway and did not spend much time in the area (Ông Hồng, 2006). Bà Bờ also remembered going to OBM in 1945 after the Japanese *coup de force*. She said that the Japanese sent a lot of people up at that time. She went up with a nun who stayed at the Buddhist temple (WR, Lot 146). The temple overlooked the road near the Scouts' camp and its remains are intact enough to still be used by BMNP staff nowadays. It had three altars along the back wall with a statue of the Buddha in the front.

The end of the war in the Pacific in 1945 was a difficult time because of a famine. At that time people would do anything to survive. Some of the caretakers took many things from the French houses at OBM after the French were imprisoned by the Japanese, and sometimes they became quite wealthy (Ông Hồng, 2006). One of the caretakers knew that his employer had buried a lot of 'treasure' in OBM before the *coup* and later he found it (Bờ, 2006). Many people from the village took furniture and other items (Chắt & Thọ, 2006). These were often sold in order to make some money. In 1945 Bà Bờ got some good timber doors from OBM that are still part of her house.

For the wealthy Vietnamese life in OBM was much easier. Ông Thân Trọng Ninh still lives in Huế. He was in his late teens when he spent his summer holidays over

several years in OBM. Attached to the royal family, the Thân Trọng family was quite large when Thân Trọng Ninh stayed at one of his uncles' villas in OBM. There may have been twenty boys from the family staying over the summer in different family houses. In the mornings they would meet at Thân Trọng Yên's house to practice foreign languages and play table tennis. Then they might have gone for a picnic at *Belvedere* or to the waterfall. Thân Trọng Ninh liked to walk, to draw and write. He made many sketches of the scenery and drew his own maps of the walking trails around OBM. The trails were more extensive than today. He also mentions a Vietnamese restaurant, SOCOA which appears on his map in the same place as the Hôtel Bany. There is no other reference to this facility. In his 2002 paper Ninh described the lush vegetation and the busy streets around OBM in the early 1940s. Ninh's uncle's house where he stayed was near the Scouts' camp and he mentions often seeing the Scout leaders Tạ Quang Bửu and Hồ Sĩрт Hoàng Đạo Thúy around OBM. Several village people also mentioned that there were often Scouts in OBM, both boys and girls. Đồ Phong Cúc was a young girl of sixteen when she spent the summer of 1940 at OBM. She said they did not go out much while in OBM, perhaps because she thought it was so cold. Her family bought their food at the Morin Bạch Mã store, just a short distance away. She noted that their house at Lot 2, (northern residential zone), located next to *Belvedere*, was built in 1938.

After the First Indochina War and the division of the country into the North and the South, there was a move by the Ngô Đình Diệm regime to reopen Bạch Mã for agricultural development. In 1957, Lê Hữu Con who now lives in Huế, was in the South Vietnamese Army and he was one of as many as three thousand men from three regiments who worked on reopening the road to the summit. He said that the road was badly damaged and had trees growing over it. They worked for about two months to rebuild it, camping beside the road as they worked. Ông Con visited the plateau during this time and he was impressed by the old multi-storied French houses there that had only minor damage from the weather and storms, although no-one was living there then. Of the road construction work he noted that it was poorly done and that the road quickly washed out during heavy rain (Con, 2006).

## **6-7 Vietnamese Scouting and the Bạch Mã National Scout Leaders' Training Camp**

The Vietnamese Scouting movement had its roots in Hanoi where the first (Vietnamese) troop was formed in 1930 by Tran Van Khac (Kroonenberg, 2005:2; Marr, 1981:80-1). There may have been some earlier French-only groups hostile to indigenous membership (Raffin, 2005:39), but within a couple of years after 1930, through the efforts of Tran Van Khac, Scout groups had formed in the major centres of Indochina. In Huế the first Scout groups were established in 1934 (Kroonenberg, 2005:2). In those early years groups formed under various religious, denominational and nationality groups. This was a time of great social and political development in Vietnam and Scouting was encouraged by the colonial authorities 'as an adjunct to school moral instruction and as a likely diversion from more serious political involvements' (Marr, 1981:80). By 1935 the ICP which had also formed in 1930, blamed the popularity of Scouting for their difficulty in recruiting young people to the Party (Marr, 1981:80).

In 1935 the *Federation Scouting Française* sent Andre Lefebvre, national commissioner of the *Eclaireurs de France*, the non-denominational branch of French Scouting (Kroonenberg, 2005:1), to review Scouting in Vietnam and to propose establishing an official relationship with the French movement. He concluded his trip with a training course for sixty Scout leaders in Đà Lạt in the Central Highlands (Kroonenberg, 2005:2; Raffin, 2005:40). His visit was influential in the formation of numerous groups within the public schools sector, and from 1935 Scouting expanded rapidly. Following Le Febvre's visit to Vietnam, the *Federation Scouting Francais* sent another Scout leader, Raymond Schlemmer, formerly a naval officer, but at that time in charge of the French Scouts' training centre, Le Breuil, with the objective of unifying Vietnamese Scouting (Kroonenberg, 2005:3).

Emperor Bảo Đại was often linked with Scouting projects (Marr, 1981:80), and served as the honorary president of the Boy Scouts in Annam in 1935 (Raffin, 2005:40). When Schlemmer came to Huế in 1936 he wanted to meet the Emperor to talk about Scouting (Toản, c. 2001:24). Bảo Đại and Schlemmer had a common interest in boating; Schlemmer was also a member of the Sea Scouts (*Scout Marins*) in France (Toản, c. 2001:23). While yachting with Bảo Đại on the Perfume River in

Huế one hot, summer afternoon, Schlemmer outlined the condition of Scouting in Vietnam to the Emperor and proposed that the Scouts be allowed to establish a training camp in the new hill resort that was being opened to development in Bạch Mã. An existing camp in Đà Lạt was suitable for Scouts in the south of the country, but they needed a site suitable for a national training camp, easily accessible to Scout leaders throughout Indochina. Bảo Đại granted land in Bạch Mã for the purpose along with 3000 Đông towards its development (Toản, c. 2001:24).

Schlemmer surveyed the Bạch Mã site in 1937 and began the establishment of the Scout Training Centre with the assistance of Emmanuel Niesdrist (Lương, 2007; Toản, c. 2001:24), an electrical engineer who managed the electrical system in Huế, and Tạ Quang Bửu, a French trained electrical engineer also working in Huế (Đỗ, 2000:1090). Tạ Quang Bửu had also been through the Boy Scout training course at Gilwell Park in England (Kroonenberg, 2005:3). The Bạch Mã training camp began operating in July 1938. Schlemmer gave the first courses and was then succeeded by Tạ Quang Bửu as camp superintendent and chief trainer until 1941. He was followed by Bach Văn Quế who managed the camp until 1944 (Quế, 2007). Training was only provided during the summer months, from June to August, which coincided with school holidays.

Vietnamese Scouting organised under a single *Federation Cochinchinoise des Associations de Scoutisme*, and became an associate of *Scouting Francais* and linked with the world movement in 1937 (Kroonenberg, 2005:3). Scouting was one of a select few organisations that were allowed to significantly expand their operations in 1939 because of limited wartime education budgets (Marr, 1981:180n). In 1939 there were seventeen Boy Scout groups in Hanoi, ten in Annam, and twenty-seven in the rest of the country including Saigon (Kroonenberg, 2005:3).

When Decoux took over as Governor-General in 1940 he introduced to Indochina Pétain's program of social reform through National Revolution. One of the main focuses of the National Revolution was the development of youth organisations, based on the argument that the country had succumbed to 'the cult of ease' and needed to be reinvigorated through training and discipline (Raffin, 2005:20). Again the Scouting movement found considerable government support. Under the treaties with Japan in 1940 and 1941, the French military became non-combatant and were commonly



employed in organising the various youth organisations (Raffin, 2005:20). This process of civilianisation of the military led inevitably to increasing militarisation of youth organisations.

Raffin quoted a 1941 report that there were 2250 Scouts in Tonkin, 1350 in Annam, 900 in Cochinchina, and 5200 in the whole of Indochina (2005:72, Table 3.1).

Nguyễn Thúc Tuân (Tuân, 2007), however, argued that the figure was closer to 20,000 at this time. Conservative Scout leaders instilled traditionalist values, naming the sub-groups (patrols) after the five Confucian virtues and displaying Chinese characters for loyalty and filial piety on the walls of meeting rooms. During the war Scouting continued to develop, with an:

emphasis on action, expansiveness, happiness, freedom, adventure and practice. Also new, and seen to be new, was Scouting's emphasis of physical labor, body-building, competition, and adherence to precise time schedules' (Marr, 1981:80).

The Japanese banned the Boy Scouts Movement in Japan during the war, but it is not certain what action they took in Vietnam at the time of the *coup de force* in March 1945. National Commissioner for Scouting, Hoàng Đạo Thúy, 'chose a neutral policy and advised members to engage only in charitable activities' (Raffin, 2005:196). Tạ Quang Bửu worked with Phan Anh, a prominent conservative nationalist, who became Youth Minister in the Trần Trọng Kim government set up by the Japanese in March 1945. They were often seen 'exhorting anyone who would listen to form paramilitary groups, practice marching, heighten one another's patriotic awareness, and serve as exemplars for the citizenry at large' (Marr, 1995:119). It seems unlikely that this militarisation occurred under an official Scouting banner because, as Raffin (2005:196) noted, 'little scouting activity occurred from March to August 1945'. It appears to have occurred, however, with the acquiescence of the Japanese military.

Bach Văn Quế (Quế, 2007) suggested that Scout training may have continued in Bạch Mã during the summer of 1945, however, Kroonenberg (2005:7) noted that in late 1945 Scout leaders approached Hồ Chí Minh with their intention of re-activating the Hướng Đạo Việt Nam, and did so in November 1945. The re-activated Scout Patriots was communist linked, however, highlighted by Hồ Chí Minh's acceptance of the role of honorary president of the Vietnam Scouts in May 1946 (Quỳnh, 1996). This led to

disagreement in the movement between those who thought that the Scouts must remain politically neutral in line with the international charter, and those who wanted the popular movement to officially support the new communist government. The dispute culminated in late 1946 when the Scouts' Commissioner-General, Phan Nhũ Ngâu, disbanded the Scouting movement (Tuân, 2007). Nguyễn Thúc Tuân, who had trained at Bạch Mã Scout camp, along with many of his Boy Scout colleagues from Huế, joined the Việt Minh in late 1945 and early 1946, and spent the next eight years fighting the French. Marr (1981:262) noted how the Boy Scouts, fostered with colonial encouragement and trained in groups that operated under patriotic names from Vietnam's glorious past, such as Hùng Vương and Lam Sơn, contributed hundreds of healthy, motivated and disciplined young cadres to the Việt Minh.

### **6-7-1 The Bạch Mã Scout Leaders Training Camp**

The Boy Scout Leaders' Training Camp was located fairly centrally within OBM, at about 1300masl and about one hundred metres north of the main access road. A description of the field survey of the campsite is included in Chapter 7-4-8. A former Scout Commissioner in Huế, Nguyễn Thúc Toàn (Toàn, 2001), published his memory of the campsite with a map (see Appendix C, Figure C-47) that has been used here to describe the site.

The camp lay adjacent to one of the summit plateau's main streams that today provides potable drinking water through a modern filtering plant. The water treatment plant is supplied from a dam recently constructed only about thirty metres upstream from the old training camp, which probably covers the former Scouts' kitchen and eating area. The camp was located on the eastern slope above the stream that was crossed by two small tributaries draining the eastern slope. The main sites within the camp were located up two ridges separated by a non-permanent stream. The emblem of the camp was two streams represented by two wavy parallel lines.

Nguyễn Thúc Toàn participated in training courses at Bạch Mã in the early 1940s. His (Toàn, c. 2001:21) description of the camp as he experienced it at that time was as follows:

In front of my eyes is the whole area of the Campsite. This is Minh Nghĩa Đường, the general meeting room, which is often used for meeting when it rains, with a green horizontal lacquered board engraved with four Chinese characters: THIÊN HẠ NHẤT

GIA (it means the first family in the world). This board was brought from Hanoi and belongs to Hồ Sứ Hoàng Đạo Thúy.

The next is the private room of the Scout Trainer and the Health Room with a reserve bed, where sick camp members are looked after. These rooms are made of wooden walls and floor on brick pillars built over one metre above the ground in order to avoid being humid. This is Không Lâm, a place for people to be undisturbed in mind and discuss moral standards in the spiritual meeting place of Buddhist and Confucian camp members. This is the altar for Catholic scouts holding a ceremony. This is the place where the Scouter R. Schlemmer lectures. He sits on a stone at the foot of a high eucalyptus. In front of him, there are fifty centimetre posts used as chairs for attendants and arranged in irregular rows due to the ground's unevenness.

On the other side of the stream is Marabout Hill which is used as an exercise ground. And the most beautiful is a silver stream flowing down sinuously and murmuringly through the campsite and under a tree-trunk bridge which is put across the stream with trees and forest string by Scouts. Any small and flat ground within the forest from the high to the low will be pitched tents. There are four teams in total.

### **6-7-2 Training programmes**

Toản (c. 2001:22) regretted that all the documents relating to the training programmes were destroyed in Huế during the Tết offensive in 1968. The leaders who participated, however, attest that the courses were the same as those undertaken by all Scouts at that time, following international practice in the manuals produced at Gilwell Training Centre in the UK. Scouting's emphasis on 'action, expansiveness, happiness, freedom, adventure, and practice' was new in the educational experience of young Vietnamese as was the focus on 'physical labor, body-building, competition and adherence to precise time schedules' (Marr, 1981:80). During the training camp the Scouts were kept busy, for example, cutting wood and constructing small bridges in the camp.

The training course started with a march from National Highway One at Cầu Hai Village to the summit campsite carrying a heavy pack, a hike of about seventeen kilometres up the mountain. Nguyễn Thúc Tuấn (Tuấn, 2007:4) remembered 'when I was at half-way, I met monkeys playing on the road, asking us with [*sic*] food and black gibbons fearlessly shouting and swinging on the trees along the road' (see Appendix B for full text). Training was practical, theoretical and moral. During the camp they learnt bushcraft, had to find their way hiking through the forest, do their own cooking and look after their companions. They also received instruction in moral thought and behaviour provided by the leaders, and here the oral history of Thân Trọng Ninh recalled often seeing Tạ Quang Bửu and Hồ Sứ Hoàng Đạo Thúy

(nicknamed ‘The Tiger’) around OBM. Hoàng Đạo Thúy was one of the original founders and one of Vietnamese Scouting’s principal leaders, and the father-in-law of Tạ Quang Bửu.

Bạch Mã Scouts Training Camp was not directly involved in the March 1945 *coup* or the August revolution. But the young men who trained in Bạch Mã were, and the practical training and self discipline they had received in Bạch Mã led some to become key figures in the subsequent struggles for independence. Perhaps most significant was Tạ Quang Bửu, whose later contribution to Vietnam’s modern history is summarised below. Many young men from the Boy Scouts, and the other youth groups formed as part of Decoux’s National Revolution, fought for independence against the French. The significance of the camp to local people in 2006 is indicated by a comment by Ông Nguyễn Thúc Tuân who said that the Bạch Mã Scout camp was a ‘sacred site’ to all Vietnamese Scouts and the most important feature of the Bạch Mã plateau (Nguyễn Thúc Tuân, pers. comm. 2006). The Scouts’ camp at OBM is symbolic of the character of the relationship between educated Vietnamese and the French during WWII. The Vietnamese respected the European roots and philosophy of Scouting, and revered the skills and knowledge it provided. They used those skills and that knowledge to assert their political autonomy and to establish, sustain and defend an independent national administration.

Scouting was revived in southern Vietnam in 1953, and was incorporated into the World Scouting Movement in 1957. Following the reunification of the country in 1975, however, it failed to regain acceptance by the communist government and was banned. In 2007 Scouting in Vietnam discretely celebrated its fiftieth anniversary of incorporation into the World Scouting Movement, the one hundredth anniversary of the World Scouting Movement, and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Baden-Powell. At the same time Vietnamese Scouting was still illegal, but was growing in popularity for the same reasons it was popular in the 1930s and 1940s; its focus on self discipline, exercise, practical skills and moral training. Scout groups meet openly in many cities in southern Vietnam and its petitions to government for formal recognition are received sympathetically by many Vietnamese leaders. In Central Vietnam, one of the Scouting movement’s objectives is to redevelop the Bạch Mã campsite. Scout groups regularly visit Bạch Mã and several have installed plaques at

the old campsite in the last decade, in recognition of the esteem in which the training camp is held by Vietnamese Scouts nowadays.

### **6-7-3 Notable postcolonial contributions from Scouts**

Hoàng Đạo Thúy, one of Vietnamese Scouting's founders and leader, and frequent visitor to Bạch Mã, was part of Hồ Chí Minh's National People's Congress in Hanoi during the August Revolution and became a leading figure in the Việt Minh after 1945. He was blamed by the French, in the late 1940s, for the Tonkin Boy Scouts support of Hồ Chí Minh's communist government. His son-in-law, Tạ Quang Bửu, was perhaps the most influential Scout associated with Bạch Mã. He had been involved in the establishment of the Bạch Mã training camp with Schlemmer and Niesdrist and was its first camp superintendent. He is fondly remembered telling patriotic stories around the campfire in Bạch Mã (Đỗ, 2000:1090). Following the March 1945 *coup* he worked for the new Youth Minister in the Trần Trọng Kim Government and was involved in mobilising youth groups around Huế. He played a critical role in the August Revolution in Huế, supported by local Scouts, and later became Deputy and then Defence Minister in the Hanoi Government. He was part of the delegation, with Hồ Chí Minh, that represented the Democratic Republic of Vietnam at the Fontainebleau Conference in July 1946 in which the French first recognized the DRV (Brocheux & Hemery, 1995:349; Đỗ, 2000:1090; D. G. E. Hall, 1970; Hammer, 1954:166). Later, in 1954 as Defence Minister, he represented the DRV at the Far Eastern Conference in Geneva at the signing of the Treaty to end the war with France that also divided the country at the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel (Đỗ, 2000:1090; Kroonenberg, 2005:13). After 1954 he became Minister for Higher Education and played an important role in the development of university and technical education in Vietnam (Đỗ, 2000:1091). Tạ Quang Bửu's contribution is representative of so many Scouts who had been part of a colonial institution strongly supported by the French administration, but who expressed their nationalist ideals for independence by fighting the French from 1946 until 1954.

### **6-8 Summary**

OBM was one of seven hill stations developed by the French in Indochina that all experienced unprecedented development in the lead up to, and during, WWII. From 1938 the character of OBM changed from a few scattered cottages to an urban development where the elite congregated in the summer months to socialise and relax.

The cool climate, the rolling hills and the rural environment with scattered villas of stone and concrete, were more reminiscent of the environment of France than the crowded plains of Vietnam. OBM represented the French desire for a retreat from the heat in a place that reminded them of the *metropole*. Hill stations were clearly distinct from the majority population, even though they depended on the Vietnamese to build, maintain and service them.

For the local Vietnamese population, the development of OBM introduced an opportunity to work for a cash income, possibly for the first time given the absence of colonial development in Central Vietnam. Hundreds, and possibly thousands of people, from many villages from Huế and the region to its south, came to work in OBM. The Cầu Hai economy flourished as a major, local source of porters and housekeepers, as well as fresh food for the Vietnamese workers at the summit plateau. The village people, however, had little contact with the French. The work they undertook at OBM was generally organised through a Vietnamese contractor. The village for Vietnamese shown on OBM Map1 is located at the western extent of the summit plateau and separated from the main residential area by a military camp. This was never developed by the French as a model site for their colonial charges, as they were developing the European urban centre of OBM or Đà Lạt (Jennings, 2003:190). The Vietnamese village in OBM was not much more than a few tents according to Bà Bờ, and appears as a blank space on OBM Map 1. People from Cầu Hai who carried supplies up to the summit could not stay overnight but had to return the same day. It is not surprising then that it was among the working class people that the underlying Vietnamese opposition to the colonial occupation of Central Vietnam was first expressed in OBM through various forms of passive resistance. They had schemes to account for their loads of tiles or cement that arrived at the summit lighter than they had left the plain. As soon as the French left in March 1945, the houses at OBM were emptied of useful and valuable items.

OBM and the hill stations of Indochina represented more than simply a holiday resort for the French and Vietnamese elite. For Decoux they were an integral part of the National Revolution introduced to reinvigorate the spirit of the country and reflected Decoux's personal vision of empire, grand and majestic (Raffin, 2005:62). Several hill stations are mentioned as sites for training camps, Đà Lạt, Tam Đảo, Ba Vi and

Bach Mã. There were at least two youth training camps in OBM, of which the Scouts' camp has been presented here as an example. The young men who came through the Scouts' training centre were provided the physical and moral training to help build a strong colonial empire for France. They grasped the opportunity for training, but as soon as the French were distracted the cultural and national pride that had been fostered at the camp was used to grasp national independence, and the physical strength and training they had developed in the camp supported them through the next eight years of fighting to regain their independence.

This chapter has presented the historical context of OBM and an overview of its subsequent history. The following chapter describes the material expression of those events by exploring the nature and scale of the architectural evidence of OBM, as well as some aspects of smaller, moveable items, as they appeared in 2006 and 2007.

## **Chapter 7      Archaeology of Bạch Mã 1930-1991**

### **7-1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of the archaeological field survey of the summit of Bạch Mã Mountain undertaken over two fieldwork seasons in 2006 and 2007. The summit plateau covers about 300 hectares of which about one-third contains archaeological remains from OBM. For this exercise, the area recorded as developed on OBM Map 1 was divided into a series of analytical zones based on landscape features as described in Chapter 5-3-1. Three additional zones were also defined outside the main residential areas that include the Scouts' camp, the Vietnamese market and village, and sites probably related to horticultural developments in the southwest of the plateau.

A field survey was undertaken to record a sample of architectural remains in each zone expected to be present from OBM Map 1. The number of sites recorded in each zone was limited by accessibility. This was mostly a condition of forest regrowth, but site destruction and site redevelopment was also an issue in the northwest, northern, northeast and central zones. Only twenty per cent of potential sites shown on OBM Map 1 could be recorded in the northeast zone because of the extent of war damage. Between twenty-eight per cent and fifty-seven per cent of potential sites were recorded in the other residential zones. A total of fifty-three architectural structures were recorded from a potential of about 130 structures in the residential zones. Extensive surveys away from pre-existing tracks and paths dating from the French era, themselves mostly overgrown, was not feasible because of the forest cover and terrain. Only observed surface artefacts were recorded including architectural sites and ceramics.

During the survey it became evident that the archaeological record represents three phases of occupation on the summit plateau before the current national park management and related tourism development. The oral history indicates that there are at least two additional occupation phases which are not visible in the archaeological record. Table 7.1 summarises the occupation phases at the summit plateau.



**Table 7.1 Occupation and abandonment phases at Bạch Mã Mountain summit plateau**

Date	Nature of occupation	Material remains and evidence
Pre 1932	Ethnic minority people	No material culture remains
1932-1945	French hill station	Architectural, associated urban (streets), ceramics, glass
1945-1954	Abandoned or may have been used as a refuge by Việt Minh during First Indochina War.	None Some initial recycling of French cultural material
1954 - 1963	Vietnamese reoccupation for agricultural development.	Vietnamese ceramics. Recycling of French cultural material continues.
1963 – 1975	Second Indochina War.	War debris and damage, re-use of architectural material
1975-1986	Abandoned, but a brief attempt at agricultural development.	Recycling of French cultural material continues as well as war debris removal
1986 - present	Bạch Mã Mountain under environmental conservation management	Current tourism developments, less than 10 sites redeveloped

The French colonial development of the hill station, OBM, is the first occupation phase for which there is known archaeological evidence. This period extends from Girard's survey of the plateau in 1932 until the French abandonment as a consequence of the Japanese *coup de force* in 1945. Amongst the old house remains there is another element of cultural heritage that consists almost completely of the remnants of Vietnamese food-related ceramics. These relics postdate the French period, and probably relate to the period between 1954 and 1963 when the South Vietnamese government attempted to reopen the area to development. Section 7-2 provides a brief overview of the ceramic assemblage at Bạch Mã which is discussed in more detail in Section 7-4-11 and 7-5. Twenty years after OBM flourished, the summit plateau including the site of the hill station, became a warzone during the Second Indochina War. Many of the old French buildings were completely destroyed and most of the remainder were damaged to some extent. The material evidence for this period that lasted from about 1963 to 1975, includes both the relics and the effects of war.

An earlier occupation probably occurred before 1932 associated with local ethnic minority people who collected forest products and occasionally traded them in the coastal villages (see Chapter 6-6). Another phase of occupation occurred from the end of the Second Indochina War when the country was reunified in 1975, until the creation of the national park in 1991. During this period many people, not only the

ethnic minority, foraged for forest products and useful items left from the war. I heard of an example of a man who collected orchids on the mountain for sale in the 1980s. At the same time local village people were trying to salvage and recycle parts from a helicopter that had crashed during the war. In the mid 1990s this crash site was the focus of a US Missing in Action (MIA) archaeological excavation (Kéo, 2001:69).

This chapter begins with an overview of the ceramic assemblage and the purpose of recording them. The nature of the material cultural remains varied from zone to zone, partly as a consequence of the nature of the environment which also varied across the study area. More significant were the effects of the Second Indochina War which also varied across the study area. Before describing the archaeological record in detail this chapter outlines the taphonomic influences, those formation processes that are responsible for the character of the archaeological record. Two of the main taphonomic factors, recycling of building materials and the effects of war, represent subsequent phases of occupation at the summit plateau.

The description of the archaeological record is divided into three parts related to the three main occupation phases on the plateau. First, the French development and occupation, 1932-45, was represented mainly by architectural remains, however, a small assemblage of ceramics was also recorded. The survey results are organised within each analytical zone, and the section concludes with an overview of the ceramic assemblage ascribed to the French occupation. The next section, 7-5, relates to the postcolonial, Vietnamese reoccupation, 1957-63, of the summit plateau that is represented mainly by an assemblage of ceramics recorded across the plateau. Section 7-6 relates to the Second Indochina War. The description of war relics is presented according to analytical zone, with a summary overview to conclude the section. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the field survey results. Architectural site plans and photos are included in Appendix C, and photos and details for ceramic artefacts appear in Appendix D.

## **7-2 Overview of the ceramic assemblage at the *Bạch Mã summit plateau***

Ceramic or pottery artefacts were recorded during the field survey of the summit plateau representative of both food and non-food related uses. The original objective for recording ceramic finds was that they were considered a potential proxy of French and Vietnamese presence within the original OBM development and might be a useful tool for investigating intercultural contact. During the survey it became clear that the contexts for the majority of Vietnamese ceramics post-dated the French period and furthermore, very few French ceramics were identified. These ceramic artefacts form part of the archaeological record and the Vietnamese pieces in particular are the main archaeological expression of one of the postcolonial phases of occupation of the summit plateau. The purpose of presenting them here is to document their presence as a part of the cultural heritage of Bạch Mã. More importantly, they suggest that the postcolonial occupation of the plateau had its own distinctive impact on the archaeological record of OBM.

A total of sixty-three ceramic articles were recorded during the field survey. These included fragments measuring a few square centimetres up to an almost complete earthenware storage jar, one of several jars recorded at the Five Lakes Farm sites (SWF Zone) (see Appendix D, Fig D-24). Following Lewis's (1980) model of colonial ceramic use, ceramics were distinguished as French, Chinese or Vietnamese based on style and quality (see Chapter 5-4). Items were identified as French where they exhibited a European style, for example several dinner plates with a diameter of about 200mm were classified as French and this was supported by a French hallmark on the base of two examples (see Appendix D). Quality of the fabric was also used to identify period of origin so that several high quality ceramic fragments (defined by the fine-particle nature of the fabric, free of inclusions) were ascribed to the French period of occupation (Appendix D, Figure D-13). Apart from roof tiles, most French era ceramic artefacts were food-related, except for two broken electrical insulators and a ceramic door knob (Appendix D, Figures D-9-10). A number of sanitary ceramics (toilet bowls, bathroom basins and baths) were also recorded that were ascribed to the French period of occupation.

Six ceramic artefacts were identified as of Chinese manufacture based on style and fabric and in two cases, a manufacturer's hallmark. Chinese ceramics fall into three categories, European style artefacts but with a Chinese hallmark, Oriental style in high quality fabric, and Oriental style using mould and mechanical decoration. Four of the Chinese artefacts are associated with the colonial period and two are associated with postcolonial ceramic assemblages.

The majority of ceramic items were, however, Vietnamese, being of relatively low quality fabric (thick walled, coarse-grained fabric with sand/pebble inclusions) and generally conforming to an Oriental style of food bowl. These generally had a rim diameter of about 120mm, and were similar in style to bowls commonly used in Vietnamese households and restaurants nowadays (see Appendix D, Figures D-14-23). Table 7-2 provides a summary of the ceramic artefacts by origin and analytical zone in which they were recorded.

**Table 7-2 Number of French, Chinese and Vietnamese ceramic artefacts recorded according to analytical zone**

Analytical zone	No. of French ceramic items recorded	No. of Vietnamese ceramic items recorded	No. of Chinese ceramic artefacts	Total ceramic items recorded
1 NWR	-	1		1
2 NR	-	-		-
3 NER	4	8	3	15
4 CR	2	2		4
5 ER	-	2		2
6 WR	1	1		2
7 SR	1	21	2	24
8 Scouts	-	1		1
9 Col Girard	-	5	1	6
10 SWFZ	2	6		8
Total	10	47	6	63

Most of the French ceramics were located in colonial contexts, associated with architectural sites. The majority of the Vietnamese ceramics were identified in contexts, not directly associated with architectural sites, with a few key exceptions. The colonial and postcolonial assemblages are discussed separately in Sections 7-4-11 and 7-5. As well as the size of the assemblages, the colonial and postcolonial ceramics differed in the nature of their distribution. The colonial period artefacts were identified in only five locations with the majority recorded at a single site. In

comparison, the postcolonial artefacts were more widespread and included a series of similar items that highlight one of the gaps in knowledge of the history of ceramic production in Central Vietnam (see Chapter 5-4). It was these items that represent a separate, postcolonial occupation of the Bạch Mã summit plateau.

### **7-3 Taphonomic influences on the archaeological record**

Taphonomic and site formation processes are an important consideration when presenting the results of the archaeological survey of OBM because the taphonomy of the site helps explain the rapid deterioration of such an extensive and substantial development over little more than sixty-five years. It also helps explain the limits to, and nature of, the site recording undertaken. Since the abandonment of OBM by the French in 1945, five main factors have influenced the current condition and nature of the archaeological record on Bạch Mã Mountain: recycling, extreme weather, vegetation regrowth, war and redevelopment.

- 1) **Recycling:** Most villas from the French era were subject to recycling of windows, doors and probably much of their structural timbers, particularly from their roofs, which increased their exposure to the elements. For example, Figure C-28 (Appendix C) shows some of the only surviving structural timbers recorded during the field survey. It shows that the roof timbers of a residence have been cut through with a saw. The oral history records the early removal of items as soon as the French were imprisoned in March 1945 (see Chapter 6-6). The process was ongoing until at least the formation of the national park at the beginning of the 1990s. After the Second Indochina War, military equipment was also salvaged, sometimes with disastrous results for those involved according to stories among local villagers. Of particular note is that fire was not an obvious cause of damage in any of the structures. Only in the southern zone were timber window and door frames recorded still in place in several houses despite significant damage to the main walls of the buildings (see Appendix C, Figure C-42). Some of this damage was the result of later military operations, discussed in section 7-6 of this chapter. The oral history suggests that recycling is the reason why so few French kitchen ceramics were located during the field survey. Most of the French kitchen ceramics were recovered from an apparent rubbish pit below the Hôtel Bany site.

- 2) **High rainfall and extreme tropical weather:** The climate at the summit of Bạch Mã Mountain is one of the wettest in Vietnam with average annual rainfall at the summit of over 8000mm (Kéo, 2001:51). Frequent and regular thunderstorms form around the top of the mountain, often on a daily basis, even during the dry season. As well, periodic typhoons in the wet season (September to February) contribute to the high rainfall and cause considerable damage to natural and cultural resources alike.
- 3) **Vegetation Regrowth:** Most sites are covered by forest regrowth and many were completely inaccessible because of thick scrub (see Appendix C, Figure C-9). The area was subject to significant chemical defoliation during the late 1960s and early 1970s (101st Airborne, 1969). Regrowth forest is characterised by small to medium trees up to ten metres high and dense undergrowth. Few large, mature trees survived on the plateau.
- 4) **War:** The most significant damage to the architectural remains occurred as a result of military operations. OBM was the site of fighting during the Second Indochina War from at least 1965 to 1973. During the war some of the earlier villas were bombed, bulldozed, incorporated into defensive positions and fought over, evidenced by the many bullet holes in remaining walls (see Appendix C, Figure C-35). These effects of war also form part of the cultural heritage of Bạch Mã Mountain and are discussed in detail as part of the third phase of occupation.
- 5) **Modern Redevelopment:** The summit plateau is the focus for tourism related developments within the national park, an important element in the park's funding. Since the 1990s a range of developments have been undertaken at the summit plateau including three private hotels, the national park's tourism accommodation, and several smaller service buildings that have been located in other parts of the plateau. Most tracks and roads developed by the national park follow roads first developed by the French. A new water treatment plant has been built at the summit plateau to provide potable water. The national park plans further private hotel development near to the existing private hotels.

The most significant of these taphonomic influences for the current study were the recycling, vegetation regrowth and war damage. The recycling, particularly the removal of roofs that left villas exposed, and the climatic conditions exacerbated

vegetation regrowth both in, and around, most villas. Vegetation regrowth was less of a problem around the summit and immediate ridges (NWR, NR, NER) where modern tourist access is most developed. In these zones, however, the war damage was most extensive, and the threat of unexploded ordnance most serious. Access to sites was easier but the extent of surviving architectural remains more limited. In the southern and central zones war damage was less severe, but little access is available for tourists and regrowth limits access except along old tracks which themselves are often extensively overgrown. In many cases the architectural remains in the central and southern zones are relatively intact, but access was limited by forest regrowth. As a result, only the main architectural features could be recorded during the field survey.

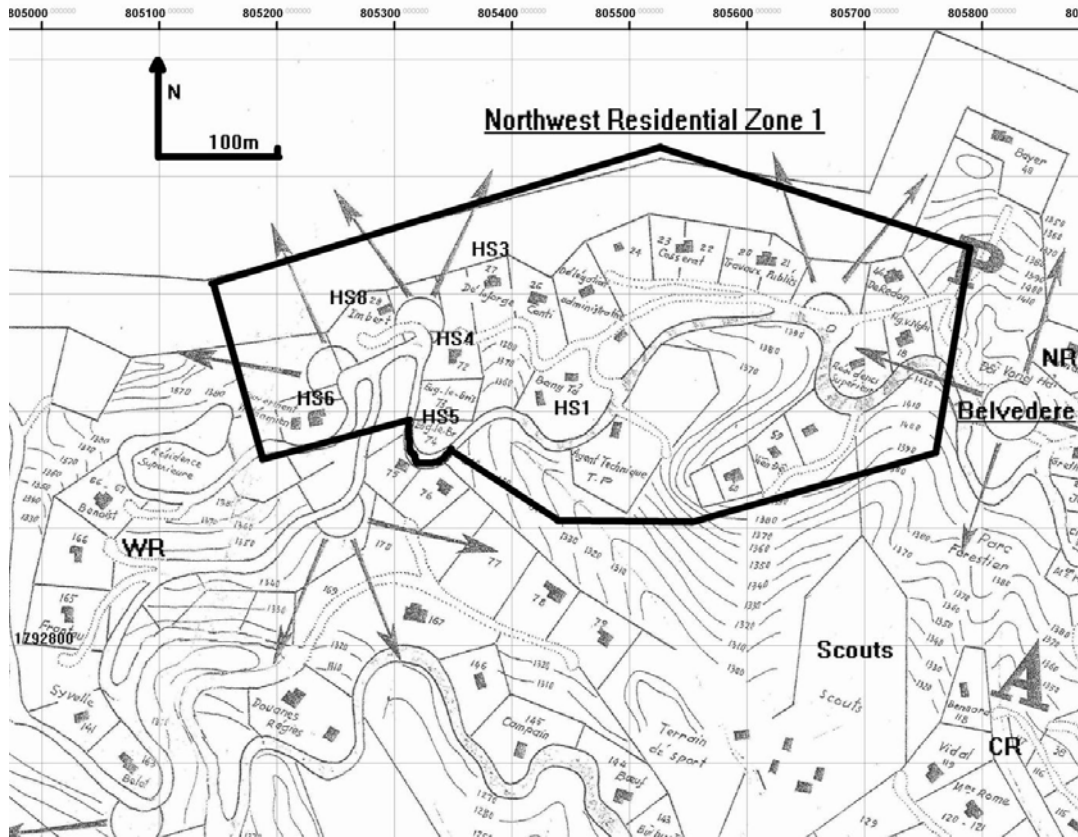
#### **7-4 The archaeological record of Old Bạch Mã Hill Station within analytical zones: the French architectural phase**

The following sections focus on the architectural remains of the hill station. Because of the large number of sites with architectural remains and their widespread distribution on the Bạch Mã summit plateau, they are presented here according to the analytical zones described in Chapter 5-3-1. The zones were defined for this study and do not necessarily relate to the zones mentioned on the management plan map, OBM Map 1. Following the descriptions of the architectural remains there is a brief summary of the ceramic assemblage ascribed to the French era. Individual site plans and photos are presented in Appendix C.

##### **7-4-1 Northwest residential area (NWR), Zone 1**

The NWR runs west from *Belvedere* for about 600 metres to incorporate the main western ridge as far as the *Government Vietnamien* villa (NWRHS6). The zone covers about thirteen to fourteen hectares and altitudes range from 1370masl to 1440masl. Road access to the NWR residential area was only via the main access road, which wound through the hill station, past the post office and *Belvedere*, before entering NWR.

According to OBM Map 1, near its peak of development NWR contained twenty structures on twenty-one allotments. These include two allotments with two structures (*Résidence supérieure, Bang Tả*), and one structure that occupied two allotments (Cosserat). Map 7-1 is taken from OBM Map 1 and shows the extent of NWR and the location of the surveyed structures.



**Map 7- 1 Northwest Residential (NWR) Zone 1 showing the sites surveyed. Most structures in the eastern part of the zone had been completely destroyed, probably bulldozed. The map shows that NWR had some of the best views to the north. This and the following maps are taken from OBM Map 1 which shows the summit plateau only. The boundaries shown here represent an escarpment which in the NWR falls about 300m to the upper slopes of the mountain, for which no topographic information is included on OBM Map 1.**

Table 7-3 presents the development details for the northwest zone, listing the lot number and owner’s name as shown on OBM Map 1, and the number of structures represented. The table indicates the individual lots surveyed during the field survey and the survey reference number applied to them.



**Table 7- 3 Northwest Residential (NWR) analytical zone, details from OBM Map 1**

Lot No. on Map 1	Name of lot owner from OBM Map 1	Number of Structures shown on map	Survey done	Survey Reference No.
	Government Vietnamien	2	No, but photos attempted	NWR HS6
28	Imbert	1	Yes	NWR HS8
27	Dé la Forge	1	Yes	NWR HS3
26	Conti	1	No	
72	No name	1	Yes	NWR HS4
73	Eug le Bris	A small circle appears on the map.	Yes	NWR HS5
74	Eug le Bris	No	No	
	Bang Tả	2	Yes	NWR HS1
	Délégation administrative	1	No	
	Agent technique	1	No	
24	Mgr Drapier (from OBM Map 2)	1	No	
23 – 22	Cosserat	1	No	
20-21	Travaux Publics	1	No	
46	De Reddon	1	No	
18	Ng. v Nghi	1	No	
	Residence superieur	1	No	
	No name	1	No	
59	Viên Đê	1	No	
60		1	No	
none	S of Del. Ad.	1	No	

The NWR contains several government institution structures, including *Travaux Publics*, *Delegation Administration*, *Résidence supérieure*, (none of which survive) as well as what appear to be OBM management structures (Bang Tả (NWR HS1) and *Agent technique*). NWR was probably the administrative centre of OBM. Mr Thân Trọng Ninh said that access to this area was limited in the 1940s because of the government villas, so that he rarely visited there (Thân Trọng Ninh, 2006-7). A number of private French dwellings also occur along this ridge, however, including M. Cosserat and M. Imbert, both prominent Huế figures. There were also two Vietnamese owned villas according to OBM Map 1, Lot 18 (Ng. v Nghi) and Lot 59 (Viên Đê). Mr Thân Trọng Ninh visited the Viên Đê residence in 1944 and sketched the view from there reproduced below (see Figure 7-1).



**Figure 7- 1** This view from Viên Đê, Lot 59 in NWR, drawn in August 1944 by Thân Trọng Ninh, shows a series of buildings in a saddle below *Belvedere*. There is almost no trace of these buildings today except for some levelled sites. The road passing just below *Belvedere* was the only vehicle access to NWR

The *Résidence supérieure* close to *Belvedere* is sometimes referred to by tourist guides as the residence of King Bảo Đại. It is probably one of the buildings shown in a drawing of the area in 1944 by Thân Trọng Ninh. Although Bảo Đại may have visited OBM, he built his summer residence in Đà Lạt (Jennings, 2003:179). Several former residents suggested that King Bảo Đại never visited OBM (Lương, 2007; Thân Trọng Ninh, 2006-7). On the other hand several villagers mentioned him visiting occasionally (Bờ, 2006a; Ông Hoàng Nhi Chắt, 2006). The ridgeline housing sites along this northwest ridge provide spectacular views to the north, including Huế on a clear day.

NWR Zone extends west from *Belvedere*, which was the main summit viewing point during the colonial period, but which operated as Fire-Base Sledge from 1969 – 1973. During the establishment of the fire-base many of the nearby French villas were bulldozed to assist security for the summit operations (Higle, 1969). As a consequence there is no visible evidence of the more easterly of the villas in NWR shown on OBM Map 1 and in Figure 7-1, apart from heavily vegetated, levelled

terraces. The villas within NWR that could be accessed and recorded are shown in Table 7-3. They include the Dé Laforge (Lot 27) villa, Eug le Bris (Lots 73 & 74), Imbert (28) and Lot 72. Field survey of this area was undertaken in 2006 and 2007 with the assistance of Forest Guard Nguyễn Tất Vinh. Details of individual villas, including floor plans and photos where the structures were accessible, are presented in Appendix C. The *Government Vietnamien* structure was accessed, but vegetation cover did not allow recording. Table 7-4 summarises the main construction variables recorded in the NWR.

**Table 7-4 Construction variables in surveyed ruins, NWR**

Survey Reference No.	Wall structural type	Floor area m <sup>2</sup>	Roofing Tile Type	Comment on roofing
NWR HS1	5	72	2	Type 4,5,13 roof tiles found adjacent
NWR HS2	2			None
NWR HS3	1	106	2	three only in service building
NWR HS4	1	24	2	None
NWR HS5	5	88	3	None
NWR HS8	2	63	4	one only

Wall type: 1-timber-framed; 2-stone; 5-concrete. See Table 5-2 for roofing tile codes.

NWR contains a range of buildings, from impressive villas along the ridge-top to NWRHS1 (Bang Tả, Appendix C) that looks like a works building. NWRHS1 is a single roomed structure, fourteen by five metres, with windows along one wall and a relatively small doorway. The mark of a bench (or bunk) attached to the northern wall may indicate that this was a dormitory for staff of the management authority. The single door seems too small for the building to have been a storage area or workshop.

Three of the villas, NWRHS3, NWRHS5 and NWRHS8 were substantial structures, averaging 85.6 square metres, however NWRHS4, positioned between NWRHS3 and NWRHS8, was represented only by the adjacent, partially extant, concrete-walled service building and a limited scatter of roofing tiles, suggesting a small, timber framed cottage. The floor area was estimated according to the distribution of the roofing tile scatter. There was no evidence of a concrete floor, suggesting a timber floor supported on posts similar to that shown in Figure 5-2. Although NWRHS3 also

had timber framed walls, these were supported on substantial stone foundations 500mm thick and standing up to one metre above ground. Some remnants of timber wall posts were still in place. There was no evidence of fire, however, only one of the wall-frame posts extended more than 500mm from the top of the stone support (see Appendix C, Figure C-6).

Three of the recorded sites used local roofing tiles, including Bang Tả, (NWRHS1), however, behind the Bang Tả structure was a scatter of three different types of imported roofing tiles. NWRHS3 also contained the broken remains of a European (Czechoslovakia) made toilet bowl within the house (see Figure 7-2). NWRHS5 was the only villa that had a kitchen and servant's room within the main structure, in this case in a small, stone lean-to structure on the back of the house. The others had separate buildings where cooking and servants' quarters were located.



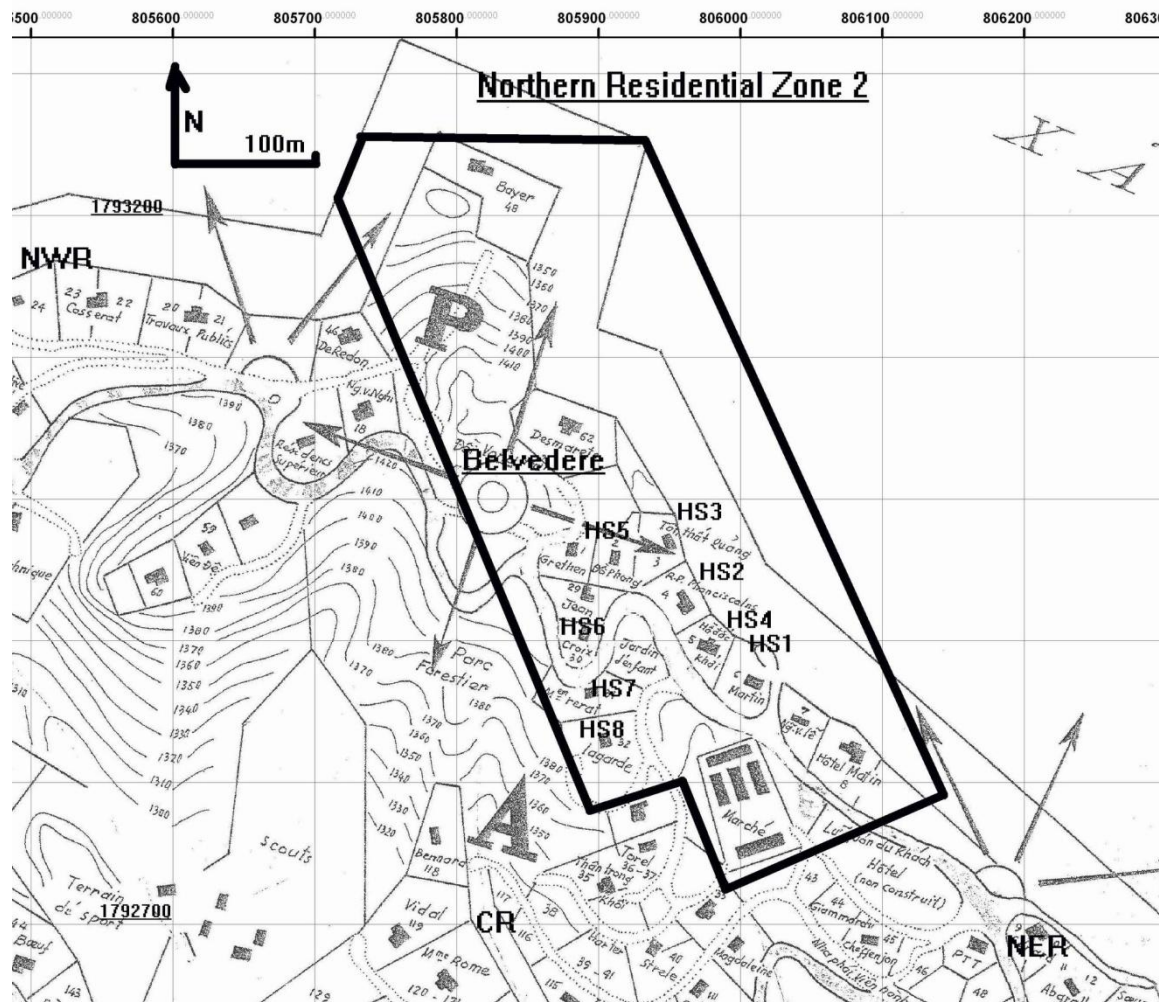
**Figure 7- 2 Toilet bowl in NWR HS3 made in Czechoslovakia. Its likely that this was imported before the German occupation of Czechoslovakia in late 1938 or the outbreak of WWII the following year when trade between Europe and Indochina became increasingly difficult.**

No food-related ceramics associated with the French colonial era were identified in any of the structures surveyed in NWR.



### 7-4-2 Northern residential area, (NR), Zone 2

The northern residential analytical zone runs southeast along a ridge from *Belvedere* for about 400 metres, and includes a small number of structures on a small spur running south from the summit (see Map 7-2). The slopes north of *Belvedere* are included in this zone, but could not be accessed during the field survey because of the steep slope and thick forest beyond the ridge. NR includes fifteen lots of which fourteen were developed, and occupies a relatively small area of about six hectares. Elevations range from 1380masl to 1440masl. This zone includes some lots on the southwest slope at an elevation of about 1380masl. Map 7-2 shows the location of the eight sites surveyed in NR.



Map 7-2 Northern residential area includes *Belvedere* and the market site shown at bottom of the zone and the Morin Bach Mã Hotel, just northeast of it, has been redeveloped for tourists.

Table 7-5 lists the names and owners of Lots in NR according to OBM Map 1. An interesting feature of this zone is the high number of Vietnamese names as plot

owners on the map. Four of the ten ridge-top sites have Vietnamese names. Hồ Đắc Khôi and Tôn Thất Quảng were members of one of the most influential royal or mandarin families in Huế (Thân Trọng Ninh, 2006-7). The Đồ Phong family were associated with the company involved in the construction of the Yunnan Fu Railway (pers. comm. Lê Quý Minh). The Morin Bạch Mã Hotel is also in this zone. The hotel has been rebuilt and offers accommodation to current visitors to BMNP. The adjacent building, Lot 7, Nguyễn V. Lễ, has been developed as part of the Morin Bạch Mã. Ridgeline plots overlook Cầu Hai village and Cầu Hai Lagoon to the Eastern Sea (South China Sea).

**Table 7-5 Northern Residential (NR) analytical Zone 2 details from OBM Map 1**

<b>Lot No. on Map 1</b>	<b>Name of lot owner from OBM Map 1</b>	<b>Number of Structures shown</b>	<b>Survey done</b>	<b>Survey Reference No.</b>
1	Grethen	1	No	
2	Đồ Phong	1	Yes	NR HS5
3	Tôn Thất Quảng	1	No	NR HS3
4	R.P. Franciscains	1	Yes	NR HS2
5	Hồ Đắc Khôi	1	Yes	NR HS4
6	Martin	1	Yes	NR HS1
7	Nguyễn V. Lễ	1	No	
8	Hôtel Morin	1	No	
29	Jean	1	No	
30	Croix	1	Yes	NR HS6
31	M <sup>llc</sup> Rérat	1	Yes	NR HS7
32	Lagarde	1	Yes	NR HS8
48	Bayer	1	No	
62	Desmarets	1	No	

The field survey of this area was undertaken in 2006 with the assistance of the head of the Forest Guard office at the summit, Mr Cái Ánh, and in 2007 with the assistance of Forest Guard Nguyễn Tất Vinh. The survey first worked up the ridge from above the Morin Bạch Mã Hotel starting with Lot 6, Martin (NRHS1). (See detailed site recordings in Appendix C-2.)

Included in the NR are *Belvedere* and the main market (Bảng Sanh market) located down the slope opposite the Morin Bạch Mã. The NR is close to, and incorporates part of, the main commercial centre of OBM and includes a number of substantial ridge-top sites that suggest this is a prime location. As well as four Vietnamese villas,

the Franciscan monks had a property in NR. Table 7-6 summarises the construction variables recorded in the northern residential zone.

**Table 7-6 Construction variables in surveyed ruins, NR**

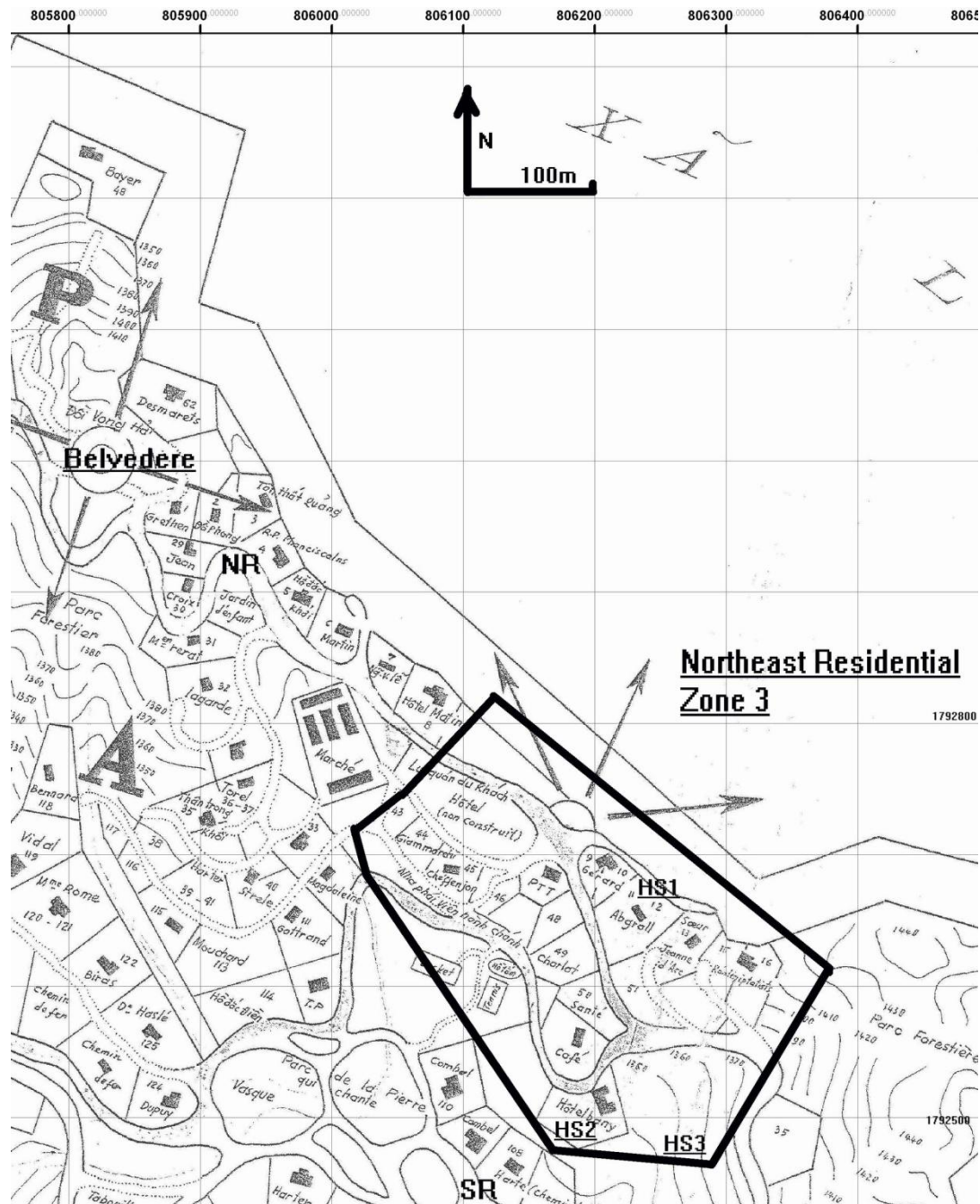
Survey Reference No.	Wall structural type	Floor area m <sup>2</sup>	Roofing Tile Type
NR HS1	1	33.5	1
NR HS2	1	75 + 24	5
NR HS3	5		3
NR HS4	2		3
NR HS5	2		11,12
NR HS6	3		1
NR HS 7	1	approx. 60	5
NR HS 8	5	83	1

Wall types: 1-timber-framed; 2-stone; 3-brick; 5-concrete. See Table 5-2 for roofing tile codes.

The Franciscan structure (NRHS2) covered a relatively large area and appeared to have an open, well-ventilated design. The extent of the structure was indicated by remnant posts, cement post-supports and scattered roofing tiles but no evidence of a cement floor. NRHS1 (Martin Lot 6) also had a timber wall construction. It was represented by the remnants of a few posts less than one metre high set in concrete supports, and again no evidence of a cement floor. The other ridge-top sites, however, were of concrete or stone. The two sites on the western side of the main access road, NRHS7 and NRHS8, were different in character from the ridge-top sites. NRHS7 was represented only by a scatter of roofing tiles and a concrete water tank, and NRHS8 was a single story, concrete building of rambling character. Floor areas for the main structures along the ridge were difficult to estimate because of the extensive overgrowth of the sites and the risk of unexploded ordnance in this zone. The market site consisted of three concrete walls standing to about 1.5 metres high enclosing an area of about 100 square metres. None of these structures used local roofing tiles, although it is possible that NRHS1 used woven leaf or thatch material for roofing similar to that shown in Figure 5-2 and Figure 6-1. The NR exhibits, therefore, structures ranging from simple, relatively small, timber-framed buildings, with timber floors supported on posts, to substantial stone and concrete villas.

### 7-4-3 Northeast residential area (NER), Zone 3

The NER zone covers lots east of the market, several lots along a small spur running south of the Post Office down to the Hôtel Bany on the southern side of the main access road, and several ridge-top sites east of the Post Office (see Map 7-3). Zone 3 occupies about five hectares, includes seventeen lots, twelve of which are shown developed, three of them showing a building occupying two lots. Elevations range from about 1350masl to 1400masl. Details of lots in NER are shown in Table 7-7.



Map 7-3 Northeast residential zone includes much of the commercial centre of OBM



**Table 7-7 Northeast residential (NER) zone from OBM Map 1**

Lot No on Map 1.	Name of lot owner from OBM Map 1	Number of Structures shown on map	Survey done	Survey Reference No.
9-10	Girard	1	No	
11-12	Abgrall	1	Yes	NER HS1
13	Sœur Jeanne d'Arc (Sisters of Joan of Arc)	1	No	
15-16	Rédemptorists	1	No	
43	No Name	No	No	
44	Giammarchi	No	No	
45	Chaffenjon	1, redeveloped	No	
46	No Name	No	No	
	PTT (Post Office)	1, redeveloped	No	
48	No Name	No	No	
49	Charlot	No	No	
50	Santé	No	No	
	Café	1	No	
	Hôtel Bany	1	Yes	NER HS2
	Hydrotherapy site	No	Yes	NER HS3

The NER incorporates most of OBM's recreational and commercial facilities. It incorporates the Post Office, Chaffenjon (a shop) and the swimming pool and tennis court opposite, the Hôtel Bany, a café, and what looks like a hydrotherapy site not shown on OBM Map 1. The seven lot numbers that run along the ridge are occupied by two large private villas, one of them belonging to Girard, probably the original surveyor of the summit plateau, as well as two sites held by the Catholic Church. The ridge-top sites have spectacular views to the east across Cầu Hai Lagoon to the Eastern Sea. Construction variables for the recorded sites in NER appear in Table 7-8.

**Table 7-8 Construction variables in surveyed ruins, NER**

Survey Reference No.	Wall structural type	Floor area m <sup>2</sup>	Roofing Tile Type
NER HS1	4	115.5	1
NER HS2(1)	2	128 (2)	2
NER HS2(2)	2	100.5	1
NER HS3	2	25	

Wall types: 2-stone; 4-cement bricks. See Table 5-2 for roofing tile codes.

Only one villa was surveyed in the NER. NERHS1 is a large, two-storey building built of cement bricks, the only example of cement bricks recorded in OBM. No roofing tiles were noted at NERHS1 (see Appendix C, Figure C-17-19).

The Hôtel Bany consists of two structures, the upper building NERHS2(1), and the lower building NERHS2(2). The upper building is located on a levelled spur immediately south of the main access road. The lower building is located about fifteen metres from the upper building, on the northeast slope below the levelled spur. The upper building was a two-storey structure with six rooms (Appendix C, Plan C-15). The upper floor of the building has collapsed, but this reveals tiled walls and some bathroom fittings still attached to the upstairs wall showing that each room had its own bathroom. A scatter of terracotta shingle (Type 2) roofing tiles, and several concrete post supports were recorded in the garden area on the southwest side of the upper building. The lower building is also two-storey. The ground floor has a large internal arched door leading into a kitchen area (see Appendix C, Plan C-16, Figures C-20-21).

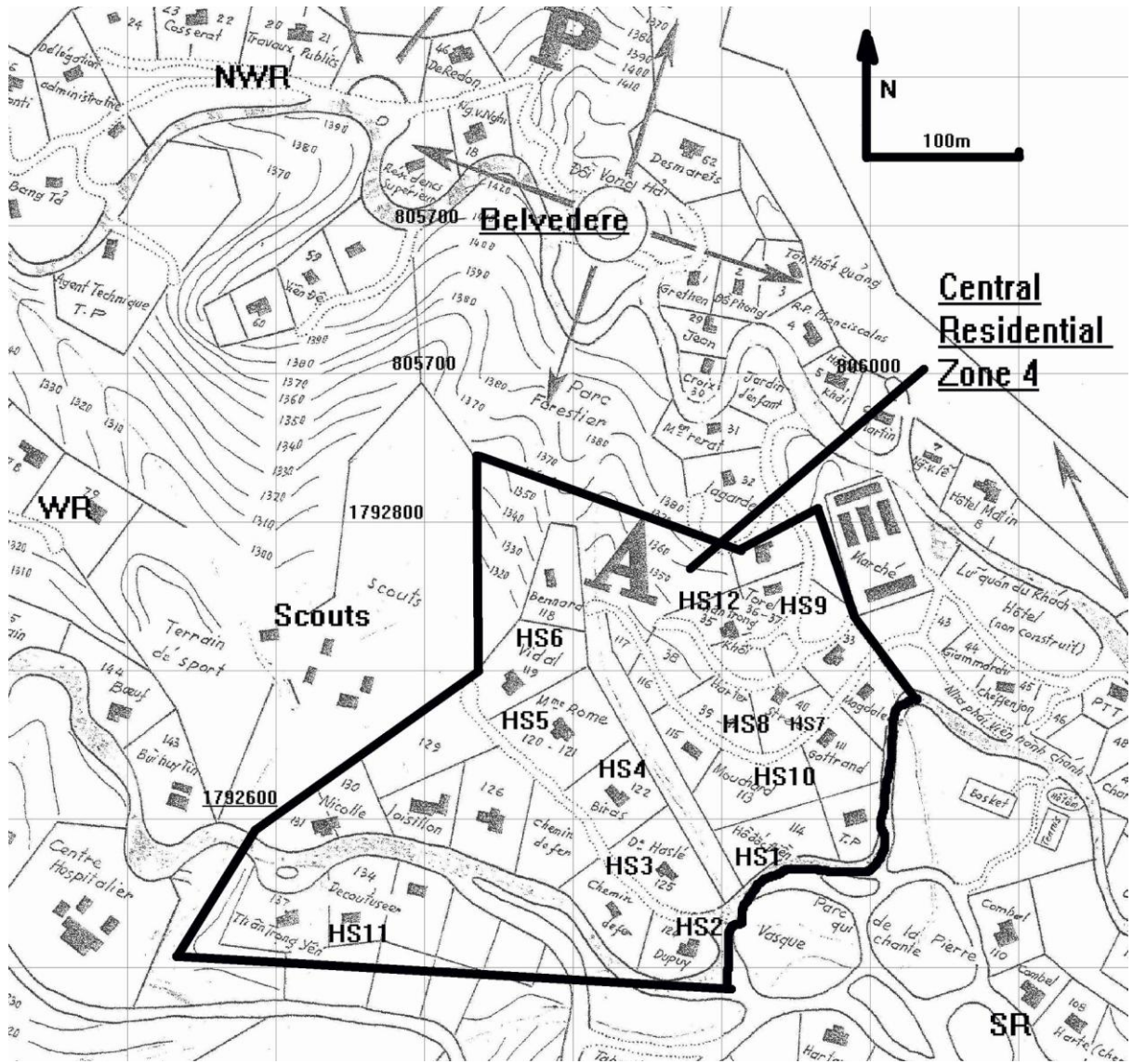
About fifty metres southeast of the lower Hôtel Bany building, located in a gully below the hotel, is a feature that appears to be a hydrotherapy treatment structure (see Appendix C, Plan C-17, Figure C-22). The structure of stone is built in the middle of the gully so that the stream would have originally flowed over a two metre high wall into a partial enclosure. Jennings (2006:53) described the significance of mineral hydrotherapy to the maintenance of the French Empire. Most important for colonialists' recuperation were the spas and mineral water of Vichy in central France, but highland mineral spas were developed in the French colonies in Madagascar, Réunion and Tunisia. Jennings suggested that hydrotherapy was never a feature of Vietnamese resorts. Perhaps the structure in Bach Mã represents the development of pulverisation hydrotherapy in Vietnam in the absence of hot mineral springs. From personal experience, visitors to BMNP nowadays often collect water from springs for its reputed beneficial mineral qualities.

Non-architectural ceramics from the colonial period were uncommon finds during the field survey. On the edge of the terrace on which the Hôtel Bany lower building was constructed, however, at least twenty pieces of broken ceramics and glass were noted eroding from a bank. The eroding material was largely European style plates, two of

which had French makers' marks. Two pieces of similar design had Chinese marks. Scattered more widely were several pieces of typical Asian ceramics, mostly pieces of rice bowls. Only a sample of these artefacts was recorded. Two small fragments of rice bowls were also located just off the terrace south of the Hôtel Bany upper building. Photos of a sample of this assemblage are included in the Appendix D.

#### **7-4-4 Central residential area (CR), Zone 4**

The central residential analytical zone occupies about thirteen hectares in an area south and southwest below the northern and northeast ridges, and north of the main access road (see Map 7-4). It includes twenty-seven lots, twenty-two of which were developed. Elevations range from 1240masl to 1380masl. Details of plot owners are shown in Table 7-9. The field survey indicated that some lots in the central residential zone, shown as undeveloped on OBM Map 1, had been built on. The heavy tree cover combined with the nature of the landscape and the relative closeness of villas in this area, made GPS identification of individual lots uncertain in some cases.



Map 7- 4 Central residential zone is separated from the western zone by the Scouts' camp

**Table 7-9 Central residential (CR) analytical zone from OBM Map 1**

Lot No. on Map 1	Name of lot owner from OBM Map 1	Number of Structures shown on map	Survey done	Survey Reference No.
33	No name	1	Uncertain	
34	Thân Trọng Phước	None	No	
35	Thân Trọng Khôi	1	Yes	CR HS12
36-37	Torel	1	Uncertain	CR HS9
38		None		
40	Strele	1	Uncertain	CR HS7
39-41	Harter	None	Uncertain	CR HS8
111	Gottrand	1	No	
	Magdaleine	1	No	
113	Mouchard	None		CR HS10
114	Hồ Đắc Diễm	1	Yes	CR HS1
115	No Name Shown	1	No	
118	Bennard	1	No	
119	Vidal	1	Yes	CR HS6
120-121	Mme Rome	1	Yes	CR HS5
122	Biras	1	No	CR HS4
124	Dupuy	1	Yes	CR HS2
125	Dr Hasle	1	Yes	CR HS3
130-131	Nicolle	1	Yes	
	Chemin de fer (Railways)	1	No	
	Marche (Market)	1	Yes	
137	Thân Trọng Yên	1	No	
134	Decoutuseer	1	Yes	CR HS11
	No Name	1	No	

Uncertainty regarding survey done results from poor GPS locations and villas in close proximity and refers to uncertainty of correct lot number and lot owner.

Many of these properties have mountain views to the south and southwest. The CR has numerous small roads winding around the hillsides, stone stairways linking different levels, and a wide variety of building sizes and styles. The topography in this zone provides some protection from the periodic typhoons that sweep across the mountain causing considerable damage both to the forest itself as well as any built structures. Many of the old villas were relatively intact, although often covered by forest regrowth, and no structures had any surviving roof.

Twelve sites were surveyed in the central residential zone, although forest regrowth limited the extent of survey in many cases. See Appendix C for site plans and photos. Table 7-10 summarises the main construction variables recorded in the central zone.

**Table 7-10 Construction variables in surveyed ruins, CR**

Survey Reference No.	Wall structural type	Floor Area m <sup>2</sup>	Roofing Tile Type	Comment
CR HS1	5	92.4	1	
CR HS2		90.5	1	Site cleared except for stone foundation
CR HS3			1	Site bombed & overgrown
CR HS4	5	90	1	Heavily overgrown
CR HS5	2	105.6	5	
CR HS6	5	90	2	
CR HS7	1	74	1	
CR HS8	2	70.4	5	
CR HS9	1	61.5	1,2	
CR HS10	2	107.5	2	
CR HS11	5	91	4, 14, 15.	
CR HS12	2	94.5	5	

Wall types: 1-timber framed; 2-stone; 5-concrete. See Table 5-2 for roofing tile codes.

Only two residential villas had timber walls, CRHS7 and CRHS9, both of which had substantial stone foundations and both used terracotta shingle roofing tiles. Of the remainder that could be determined, four were built of granite, and four of concrete. Five or six had no evidence of roofing tiles suggesting they had steel roofs. Only two sites showed the use of local roofing tiles and one of these used a mixture including local and imported tiles. Structures ranged from 61.5 to 107 square metres for their ground floor dimensions, and three had evidence of an upper storey. The average area of the ground floors was 87.5 square metres, although eight of the eleven measured sites were more than ninety square metres. There were none of the small timber-framed structures with floors supported on timber posts noted in Zones 1 and 2.

Several ceramic items were recorded in the CR, although few can be attributed to the colonial period. Those that can, include a ceramic door knob and one part of an electricity-transmission cable insulator (see Appendix D, Figure D-10). Of particular interest were two pieces of what was clearly an item of Japanese ware, the only Japanese ceramics recorded during the survey (see Figure 7-3). Unfortunately, these pieces were seen late in the day and were only photographed *in situ* and left to record at a later date. They had not been collected or recorded in detail by the end of the fieldwork. These items were seen on a road near the eastern boundary of this analytical zone behind the Chaffenjon building near Lot 43 or 44. Toyo Toki is the

name of a Japanese sanitary ceramic (bathroom and toilet ware) manufacturing company that began operating in 1917. It still operates under the name of Toto and in 2008 was Japan's largest producer of sanitary ceramics (Anonymous, nd-c).

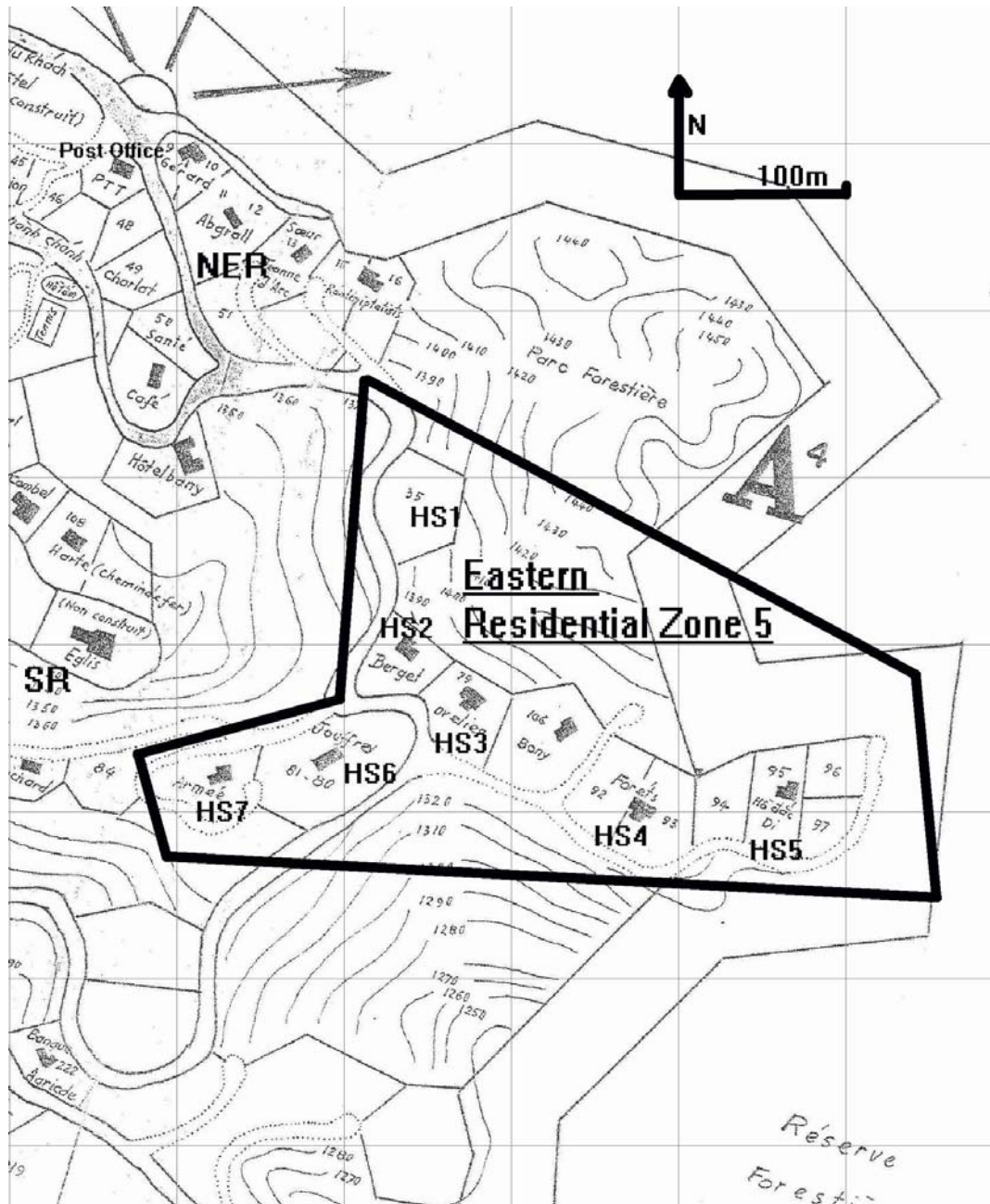


**Figure 7- 3** This is the only piece of ceramic ware identified in OBM clearly related to the Japanese occupation of Indochina. Toyo Toki (now Toto) has been a major producer of sanitary ceramics in Japan since 1917.

#### **7-4-5 Eastern residential area (ER), Zone 5.**

The eastern residential zone occupies an area of about five to six hectares, on the southern slopes of one of the four peaks of Bạch Mã Mountain and on a ridge running west of this hill (see Map 7-5). It contains twelve lots, seven of which are shown as developed on OBM Map 1. Elevations range from 1330masl to 1390masl. One of the lots shown as undeveloped was found to be developed during the field survey, although subsequently had been destroyed. Most of these lots have views to the south and west, but Lot 95 (ERHS5) at the eastern end of a spur has views towards the coast in the southeast, and the Lots 80-81 (Jouffrey, ERHS6) and Armeé (ERHS7) had ridge-top locations with extensive 360° views. Lot details are shown in Table 7-11. Lot number 35 in this zone is duplicated with a central zone lot. Site plans and photos are presented in Appendix C.





Map 7- 5 Eastern residential zone showing locations of recorded sites

Table 7-11 Eastern residential analytical zone (ER) Zone 5.

Lot No.	Name of lot owner from OBM Map 1	Number of Structures shown	Survey done	Survey Reference No.
35	No Name shown	No	Yes	ER HS1
None	Berget	1	Yes	ER HS2
79	Drelier	1	Yes	ER HS3
106	Bony	1	No	
92-93	Forêts	1	Yes	ER HS4
94, 96, 97	None	None	No	
95	Hô Đắc Di	1	Yes	Er HS5
80-81	Jouffrey	1	No	ER HS6
	Armeé	1	No	ER HS7



In the eastern part of this zone at Lot 95 Hồ Đắc Di (ERHS5), there was a problem reconciling the GPS readings with the map position, despite good satellite reception that gave excellent results in other parts of the study area. There is another problem with the OBM Map 1 in this area; there appears to be a road running south from Drelier, Lot 79 (ERHS3) and running east of HS6 and HS7 which does not exist and was not feasible because of the steep terrain at that point. A minor road shown opposite Berget (HS2) is present, and has been recently developed as a walking trail by BMNP staff. This problem of reconciling the map and GPS coordinates also occurred immediately south of this area and may indicate a degree of inaccuracy with the map in the western margins, in relation to GPS readings.

Seven sites were surveyed in the eastern zone. Table 7-12 summarises the construction material distribution identified in ER structures.

**Table 7-12 Construction variables in surveyed ruins, ER**

Survey Reference No.	Wall structural type	Floor area m <sup>2</sup>	Roofing Tile Type	Comment
ER HS1	5		1	Destroyed
ER HS2	2, 5	78.5 + 2nd storey	6	
ER HS3	1	43	2	
ER HS4	1	23	4, 7 and 8	Tiles associated with Garage only
ER HS5	2	86	2	
ER HS6	2			Not recorded in detail
ER HS7	2	-	-	Not recorded in detail

Wall types: 1-timber-framed; 2-stone; 5-concrete. See Table 5-2 for roofing tile codes.

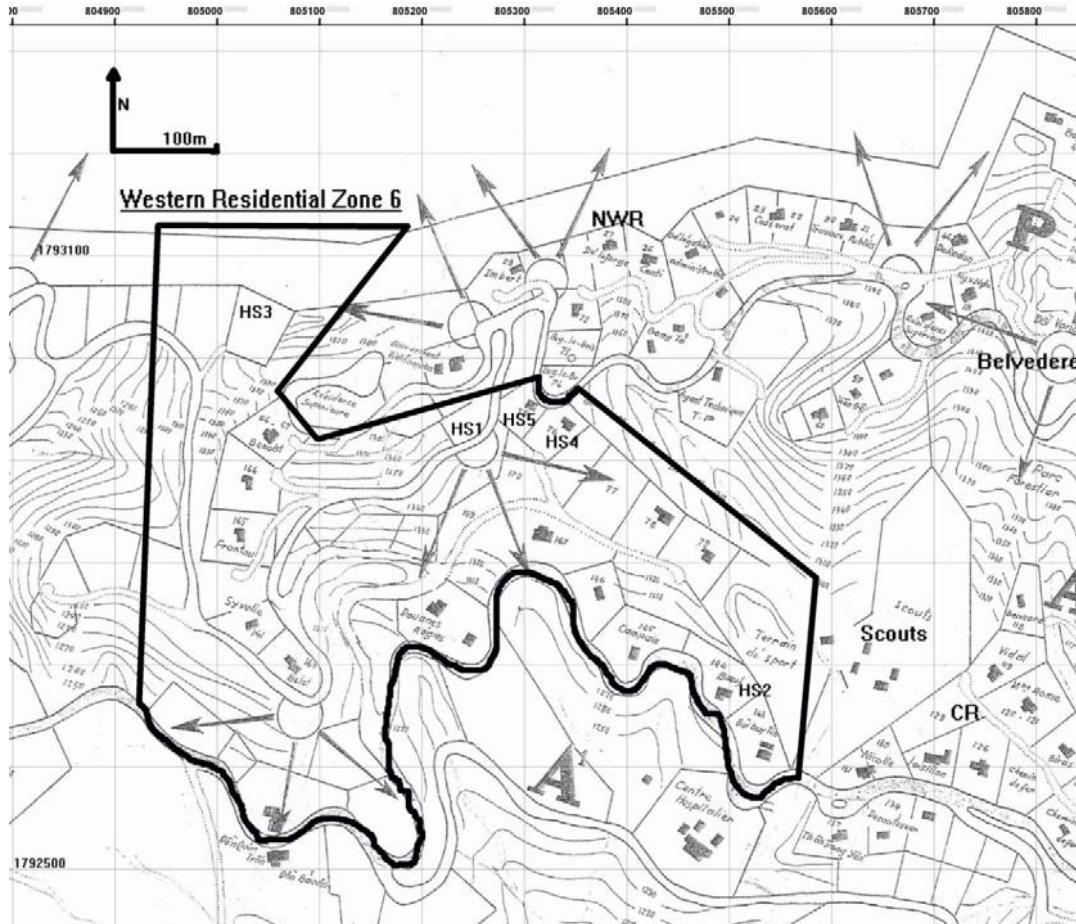
The first site visited in this zone, ERHS1, Lot 35, was completely destroyed leaving only one corner of concrete wall on the edge of a crater about fifteen metres wide, and a three-room service building still largely intact. Two sites consisted of concrete slabs. The Drelier villa, ERHS3, had cement floor tiles covering a concrete slab and terracotta shingle roofing tiles covered the site. Outside this site the road had been tunnelled under, and the collapsing tunnel showed some building material used to support the walls and roof. At the furthest extent of the ER zone was ERHS5, the Hồ Đắc Di villa. The stone walls of the main house were largely intact as was the service building. The structure had no roof or window and door frames. The three imported

roofing tiles were associated only with a garage adjacent to the ERHS4 (*Forets*) service building.

Two structures on the southern spur road, ERHS6, Jouffrey Lots 80-81 and the adjacent site Armée (ERHS7), were visited, photographed, but not recorded (see Appendix C, Figures C31-33). Both were large stone structures built on a ridge with extensive views across the mountains. Both were heavily overgrown.

#### **7-4-6 Western residential area (WR) Zone 6**

The WR occupies a relatively large area of about seventeen hectares, west of the Boy Scouts' camp, east of the military camp and north of the main access road (see Map 7-6). The landscape incorporates part of the western end of the northwest ridge, a couple of smaller ridges running south of the main northwest ridge, and the mid slopes adjacent to the main access road. It contains twenty-nine lots, fourteen of which are shown as developed. Elevations range from 1250masl to 1380masl. Two structures in this zone were recorded that do not appear on OBM Map 1. Two lots have views to the north from the northwest ridge, while most are on the slopes below with views to the west and south. Developed lots are shown in Table 7-13.



Map 7- 6 Western residential zone showing the location of sites recorded  
 Table 7-13 Western Residential (WR) analytical zone from OBM Map 1

Lot No. on Map 1	Name of lot owner from OBM Map 1	Number of Structures shown on map	Survey done	Survey Reference No.
None	Not shown	None	Yes	WR HS3
None	<i>Résidence supérieur</i>	None		
66-67	Benoist	1	No	
166	No Name	1	No	
165	Frantou	1	No	
141	Syvelle	1	No	
163	Belot	1	No	
None	Douanes Régies (Customs excise)	1	No	
75	No Name	1	Yes	WR HS5
76	No name	1	Yes	WR HS4
78	No Name	1	No	
79	No Name	1	No	
167	No Name	1	No	
146	No name (Buddhist temple)	1	Yes	WR HS2
145	Campain	1	No	
144	Bœuf	1	No	
143	Bùi Huy Tin	1	No	
None	No Name	None	Yes	WR HS1

Five sites were surveyed in the western residential zone. Construction details are shown in Table 7-14. These included a Buddhist shrine, with intact concrete walls, which possibly had an adjacent living area of timber frame construction, represented by a scatter of roofing tiles. Bà Bờ talked about visiting a nun here in 1945 (Bờ, 2006). Nowadays, some of the BMNP summit-staff regularly use this place for prayer and offerings, although it has no roof.

**Table 7-14 Construction variables in surveyed ruins, WR**

Survey Reference No.	Wall structural type	Floor area m <sup>2</sup>	Roofing Tile Type	Comment
WR HS1	1	53	2	
WR HS2	3	69	2	Tile type 14 found adjacent to main structure
WR HS3	3	91	6	
WR HS4	5	93.5	2	Tiles noted on external area only
WR HS5	2	58.5	9	

Wall types: 1-timber-framed; 2-stone; 3-brick; 5-concrete. See Table 5-2 for roofing tile codes.

Two villas, WRHS3 on the northwest ridge, and WRHS4 on a spur of the northwest ridge, commanded extensive views to the north and northwest, and for WRHS4 also to the south and west. Both these villas were more than ninety square metres in floor area. WRHS1 was a timber-framed structure on a concrete slab and WRHS5 a concrete walled structure. Stacks of building material, stone and roofing tiles, around WRHS5 suggest that part of the site was under construction at abandonment. Four of the five structures recorded in the WR used local roofing tiles.

### **Ceramics**

Two sites contained ceramics. Firstly, the Buddhist temple had fragments of modern plates and bowls, and some complete modern examples still in use. However, at the edge of the floor were also two fragments of plain white glazed pottery, one with part of the makers mark with 'France' printed below (see Figure 7-4).



**Figure 7- 4 Ceramic fragment from temple site.**

A fragment of vitrified material was also found (see Figure 7-5). This piece, red with series of underglazed gold stripes, appears to be a fragment of a vitrified article, possibly a figurine of a deity. Bà Bờ (2006b) mentioned a Buddha statue as big as a vase at the temple in 1945. Also on the road north of WRHS1 was noted part of an electrical transmission insulator.

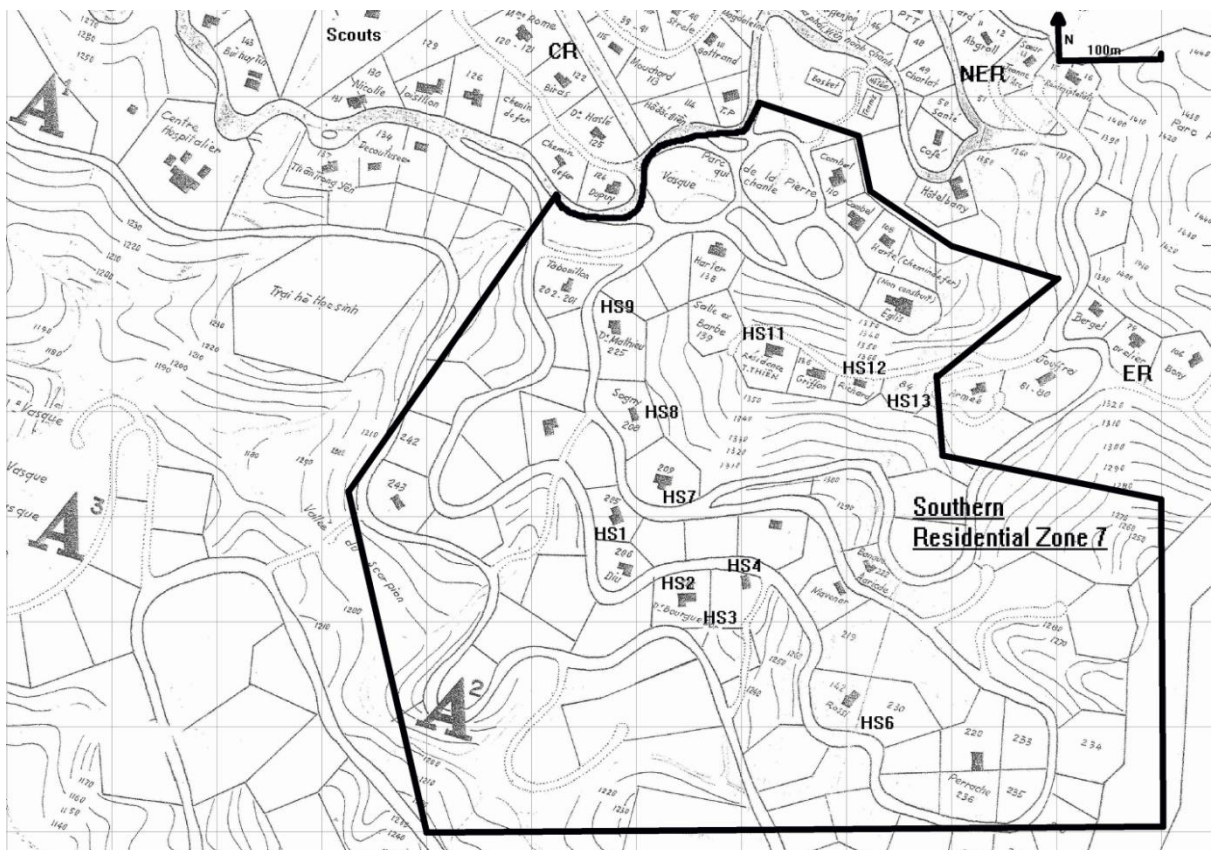


**Figure 7- 5 Vitrified fragment from temple site**



### 7-4-7 Southern residential area (SR), Zone 7

The southern residential zone covers most of the residential development south of the main access road and west of the eastern residential zone (see Map 7-7). Covering a relatively large area of about forty-five hectares, it contains about sixty-two lots of which twenty-three were shown developed on OBM Map 1. Elevations range from about 1200masl to 1370masl. Twelve sites were recorded during the field survey, some of which do not appear on OBM Map 1. Problems with reconciling GPS readings with OBM Map 1 in the southeast corner of this zone are similar to that noted in the eastern residential zone. There seems to be some distortion in the extreme east of OBM Map 1. Four villas in this zone, Lot 84 (SRHS13), Richard (SRHS12), Lot 136 (Griffon), and Thừa Thiên Residence (SRHS11), are located on a ridge running west from the eastern zone. These sites are fifty to eighty metres higher than other southern zone sites.



Map 7- 7 Southern residential zone showing the location of surveyed sites

Table 7-15 lists the names and lot numbers shown in the southern zone on OBM Map 1. Twelve villa sites were recorded in 2006 and 2007 during the field survey with the assistance of Nguyễn Tất Vinh and Lê Quý Minh. A further site, referred to as the

Valley Site (initially distinguished as the Western and Eastern Valley sites which appear on some artefact labels) extended for about 100 metres along a gully in the northeast corner of the southern zone. This is a lower part of the same gully in which the hydrotherapy site was recorded in NER zone. The valley sites are discussed in more detail below under the second occupation phase of the summit plateau.

**Table 7-15 Southern Residential analytical zone (ER) Zone 5, details from OBM Map 1**

Lot No. on Map 1	Name of lot owner from OBM Map 1	Number of Structures shown on map	Survey done	Survey Reference No.
219, 230, 233-236, 238-240	No Name	None	No	
84	No Name	None	Yes	SR HS13
	Richard	1	Yes	SR HS12
136	Griffon	1	Yes	
	<i>Résidence Thua Thien</i>	1	Yes	SR HS11
139	<i>Sale ex Barbe</i>	None	No	
138	Harter	1	No	
110	Combel	1	No	
	Combet	1	No	
108	Harte (chemin de fer)	1	No	
201-202	Tabouillon	1	No	
225	Dr Mathieu	1	Yes	SR HS9
208	Sogny	1	Yes	SR HS8
209	No name	1	Yes	SR HS7
205	No Name	1	No	
206	Diu	1	Yes	SR HS1
243	No Name	1	No	
216	Dr Bourgue Dor	1	Yes	SR HS2
222	<i>Banque Agricole</i>	1	No	
	Mavenor	1	No	
142	Rossi	1	No	
220		1	No	
236	Perache	None	No	
		None	Yes	SR HS3
		None	Yes	SR HS4
		None	Yes	SR HS5
		None	Yes	SR HS6

Table 7-16 summarises the distribution of construction variables recorded in the southern zone. Site plans and photos are presented in Appendix C.

**Table 7-16 Construction variables in surveyed ruins, SR**

Survey Reference No.	Wall structural type	Floor area m <sup>2</sup>	Roofing Tile Type
SR HS1	5	84.5	3
SR HS2	1	48	2
SR HS3	5	80	1
SR HS4	5	63.5	2
SR HS5	5	27	2
SR HS6	5	136	6
SR HS7	5	110.5	3
SR HS8	5	80.5	6
SR HS9	5	113	6
SR HS11	2	117	4
SR HS12	3	139	6
SR HS13	5	90	1

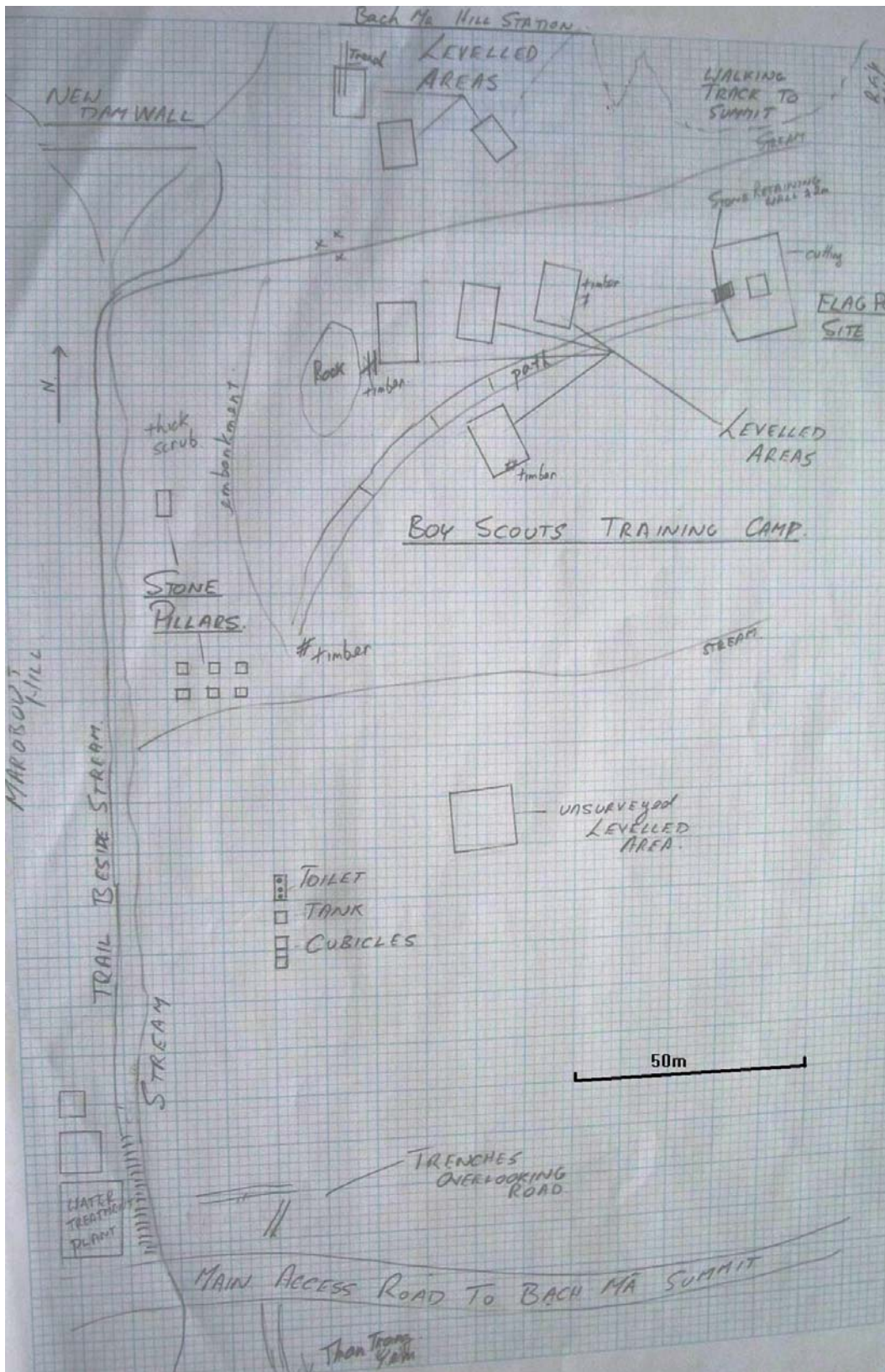
Wall types: 1-timber-framed; 2-stone; 3-brick; 5-concrete. See Table 5-2 for roofing tile codes.

Twelve villa sites were recorded, however, it was concluded that SRHS5, although located further than usual from the main house, was a service building for SRHS6, leaving eleven villas in the sample. Sites within the southern zone are generally more widely distributed than in other zones, with individual villas rarely visible from its nearest neighbour. Excluding SRHS5 the average floor area for these structures is 96.5 square metres. Only one recorded site, SRHS2, had used timber for its walls, nine used concrete and one, the Thua Thiên Residence (SRHS11), employed stone for its walls. Two sites had no roofing tiles recorded, and seven of the total eleven, used local roofing tiles. Only the Thua Thiên Residence had a second floor. Although it is possible that others had living space in large roof cavities, none of these retained stairways. SRHS3, SRHS4 and SRHS6, the most southerly sites, all retained at least some of their timber window and door frames. SRHS4 was notable for a large number of glass bottles left on a narrow terrace behind the main house. Most of these were brown wine bottles without embossed marks and not dated.



#### **7-4-8 The Bạch Mã National Boy Scout Leaders' Training Camp, Zone 8**

The Scouts' training camp is located about one hundred metres north of the main access road, and lies adjacent to one of the summit plateau's main streams that today supplies potable drinking water through a modern filtering plant. The Scouts' camp occupies most of this small gully and is separated from the residential developments of the central zone and the western zone by ridges to the east and west. The water treatment plant, commissioned in 2003, is located adjacent to the main road and is supplied from a dam constructed only about thirty metres upstream from the old training camp, and which probably covers the site of the kitchen and eating area shown on a map of the site published in an article by Scout Commissioner Nguyễn Thúc Toàn in 2001 (Toàn, 2001) (see Appendix C, Figure C-47). The camp is located on the eastern slope above the main stream, and is crossed by two small tributaries draining the eastern slope. The main sites within the camp are located up two ridges separated by these non-permanent tributaries, and also on the slope north of the northern most stream. The camp is located in forest on approximately a ten degree slope. Map 7-8 shows the various features recorded in the campsite in 2007.



Map 7- 8 The Boy Scouts' camp as recorded in 2007

The field survey of the old campsite was undertaken in 2007 in the company of several Scout leaders from Huế and Đà Nẵng who were familiar with the site and who could identify the former function of specific locations. Two locations at the bottom

of the slope beside the main stream, both marked by a series of stone pillars, were identified as the sites of the general meeting room to the south, and about fifty metres to the north of this, the residence for the Deputy Camp Commissioner (DCC) and a store room and rest area north of that (see Map 7-8 and photos in Appendix C-8).

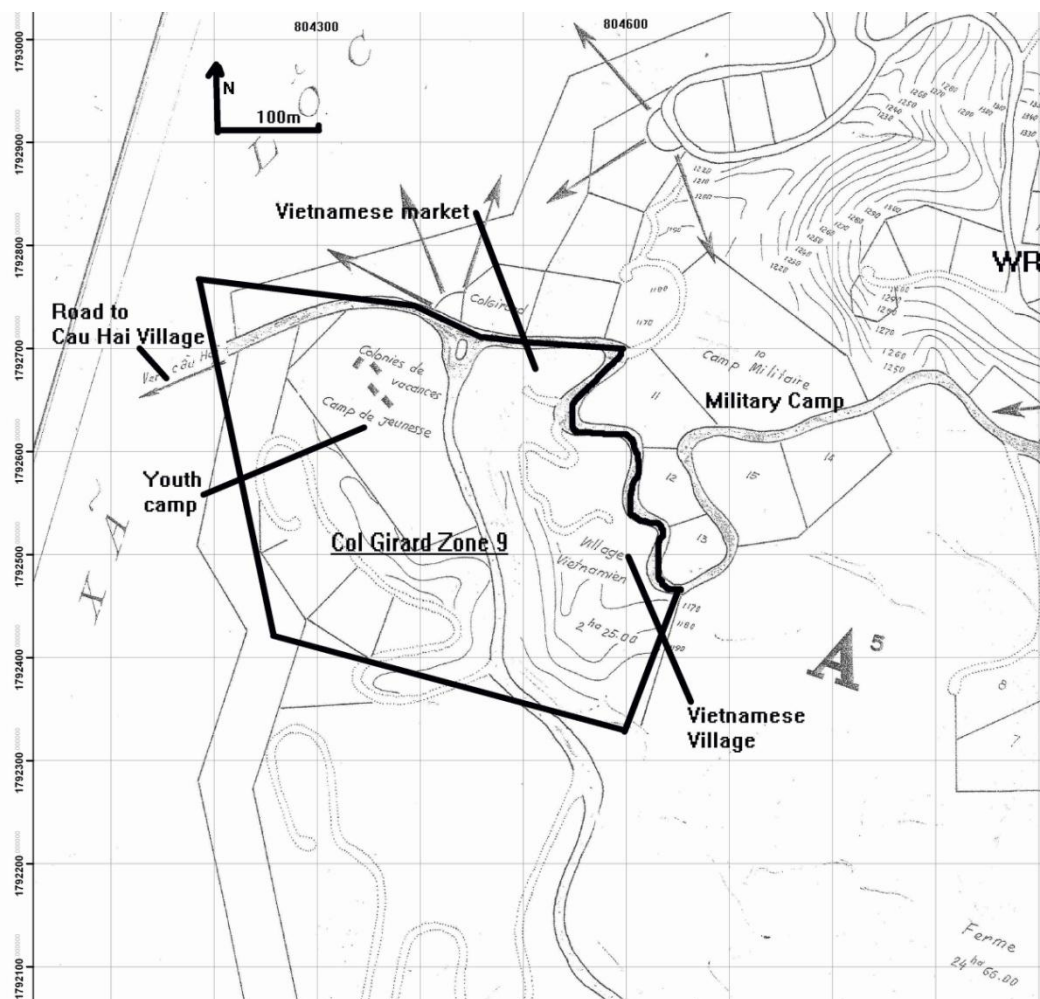
Up slope to the east, above these two architectural sites, there is a series of levelled areas. Several of these are supported by dry stone retaining walls from one to two metres high on the down-slope side while the other side is cut into the hillside. The central ridge has four levelled areas, from five to twenty-five metres apart, and generally about five metres by six metres (thirty square metres) in area. Scout leaders remembered these were camping areas where trainees pitched their tents on a wooden platform that raised them off the wet forest floor. A trail leads between these areas up the central ridge about eighty metres to a more substantial levelled area supported by a dry-stone retaining wall two metres high on the western side, and with access by stone steps up through the centre of this retaining wall (Appendix C, Figure C-49). This levelled area, cut into the hillside on the eastern side is about ten metres by ten metres was identified as the flag pole site. Even today, a small mound in the centre of the clearing marks the original support for the flagpole in the 1940s. On the retaining wall beside the steps, several plaques have been installed in recent years to commemorate the old training camp and visits by Scout groups over the last ten years (See Appendix C, Figure C-48-50).

On the southerly ridge, about fifty metres above the site of the DCC's residence, and across the tributary south of the flag podium, is a further levelled area. Former Scouts remembered a training area where trainees could sit on stumps and listen to the DCC's lectures in this location. A further three levelled areas are located on the northern side of the northern tributary. According to Scout Commissioner Nguyễn Thúc Toàn's map of the campsite (Appendix C, Figure C-47), the highest, most easterly of these was a campfire site. During the field survey another trail was noted leading from here, zig-zagging up the steep slope. This trail may have originally lead to the top of the hill adjacent to *Belvedere* but today the path ends about fifty metres below the hilltop as a result of landslides. The path terminates now at a deep tunnel cut in the upper slope of the hillside, one of a series of tunnels constructed in the late 1960s or early 1970s by NVA soldiers and discussed later in this chapter.

South of the main campsite facilities an ablution complex was noted that included an overhead water tank (collapsed) and toilet and washing facilities. Scout leaders did not remember this feature and it does not appear on Nguyễn Thúc Toàn’s map of the site. Its presence conforms, however, with the French concern for health and sanitation in OBNM noted in the police regulations for the area, and in Cooper’s discussion of French colonial urban planning (Cooper, 2001:149; *Règlement De Police du Centre - Urbain de Bach Ma, 1939*).

### 7-4-9 Col Girard area (CG), Zone 9

The Col Girard zone is located in the western parts of the Bạch Mã plateau and incorporates three main cultural features, the Vietnamese market, the Vietnamese village and a youth camp. The market is the first feature that greets a visitor as the road enters the plateau from Cầu Hai village (see Map 7-9).



**Map 7-9** The Col Girard analytical zone. The road junction marks the point at which the main road enters the summit plateau. The Vietnamese market and village are located to the southeast of this road junction, and a youth camp on the hilltop to the southwest

The Vietnamese market is located at a bend in the creek just southeast of where the road from Cầu Hai village enters the plateau and a track leads off to the south about one kilometre to the *Grande cascade* (now called the Rhododendron Falls) on the southwest edge of the plateau. The market is not shown on OBM Map 1, but is indicated on the second version of the map, and is referred to among BMNP staff as the Vietnamese market. The creek bank is lined with a stone retaining wall around the market site. Several small platforms about three by five metres have been levelled into the slope on the eastern side of this area. Seven ceramic fragments were identified as well as several examples of US military ration tins.

The Vietnamese village is shown on OBM Map 1 as located on the hill behind the market. Unfortunately, access to this area was not possible in 2007 because of the extensive forest damage resulting from Typhoon Xangsane in late 2006.

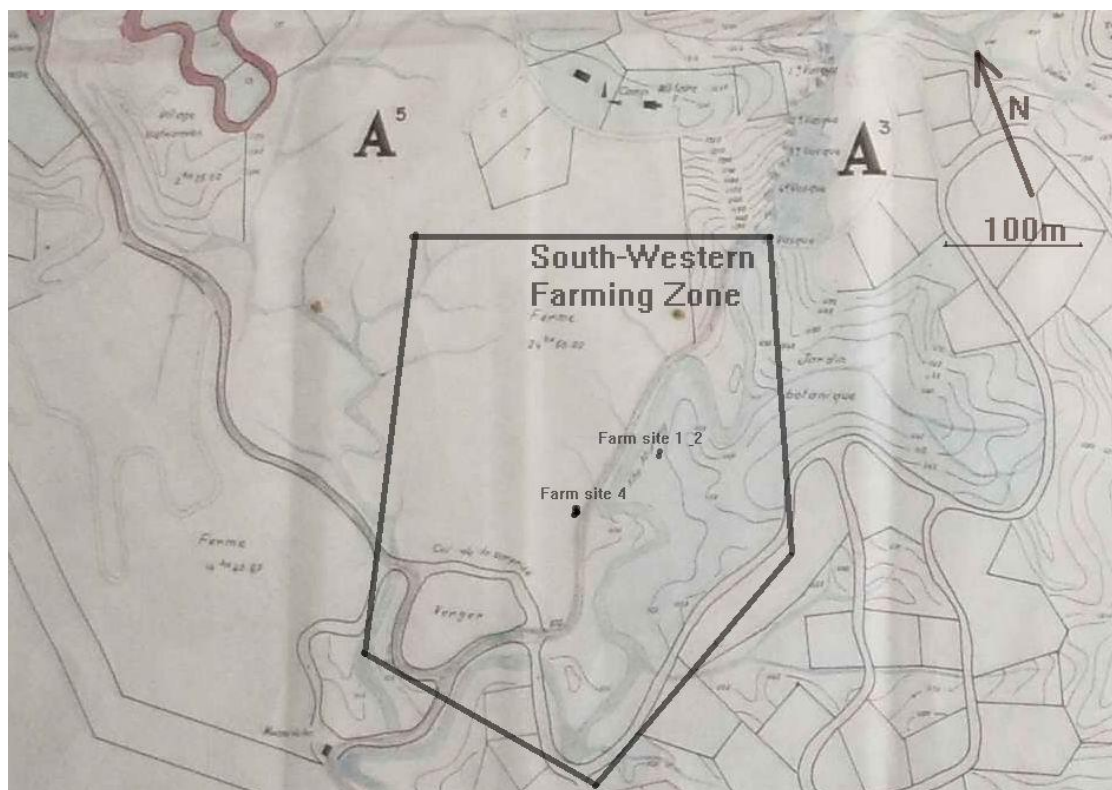
The youth camp is located on top of a small hill east of the market and overlooked the narrow pass where the road from Cầu Hai village enters the plateau. The camp consisted of several sections covering about one hectare. A defended helicopter landing area constructed during the Second Indochina War has removed any structures from the top of the hill. Trenches surround the main hilltop and circular gun emplacements were located at two ends. Just to the south of the hilltop are two levelled areas that have remnants of the youth camp. The westerly point contains a concrete slab 14-by-5.5 metres. Ten metres to the east of this is a kitchen area that is comprised of a 2-by-2.5 metres, above-ground, rectangular concrete tank, a brick stove with a central chimney and four cooking points on top, and a scatter of terracotta shingle roofing tiles covering an area of about six by four metres. On the eastern side of the main hilltop are more ruins including the remains of a series of pit toilets similar to those seen near the Scouts' camp, a water tank, and a scatter of terracotta shingle-type roofing tiles.

To the south of the Col Girard Zone is an extensive area of gently sloping land that was allocated to agriculture on OBM Map 1, and is reputed by BMNP staff to have been farmed briefly in the late 1950s.



### 7-4-10 Southwest farming zone (SWF), Zone 10

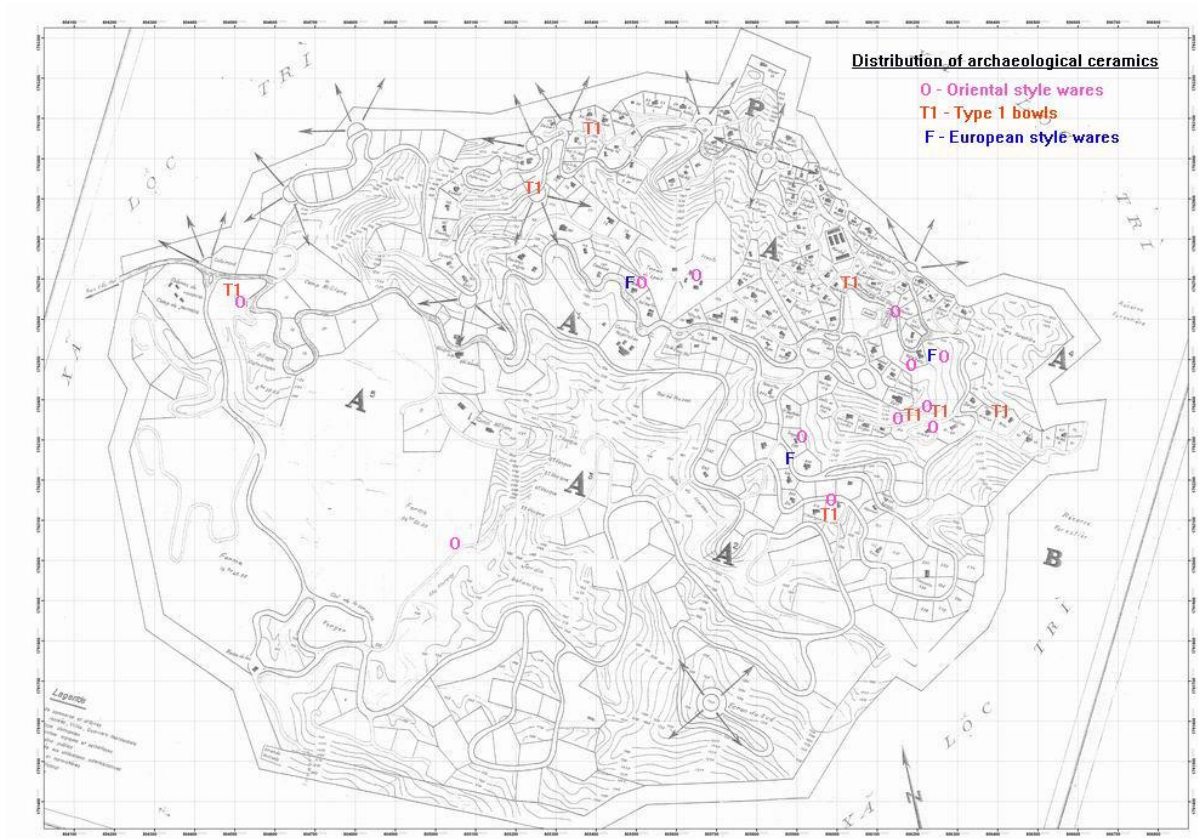
The southwest farming zone includes a cluster of small sites adjacent to the Five Lakes Walking Trail, a popular tourist walk that leads from the BMNP guesthouse to the spectacular Rhododendron Falls. The site is close to a US MIA (Missing in Action) site where an excavation was conducted in the 1990s. The farm site consists of two levelled areas, an assemblage of ceramic pots and other items, and about six terracotta roofing tiles. The roofing tiles, two of the ceramic fragments and a small glass bottle were probably associated with the French colonial period, however, the site was ascribed to the postcolonial period because of several ceramic fragments that suggest a later occupation. Furthermore, the oral history suggests that the area was farmed in the late 1950s. Therefore, the assemblage is discussed below as part of the first postcolonial phase of occupation.



Map 7- 10 The southwest farming zone

### 7-4-11 Overview of ceramics from the French colonial era

Of the sixty-three ceramic artefacts and fragments recorded across the study area, only fourteen could be related to the French colonial era, of which four were probably manufactured in China. French era ceramics were identified by the style and quality of the article according to Lewis's model of colonial ceramics use, discussed in Chapter 5-4. Map 7-11 shows the three main locations in which European-style kitchen-ceramic artefacts were identified. Map 7-11 also shows the locations for most of the Oriental style ceramic artefacts, with specific reference to the distribution of Type 1 bowls which were the most common Vietnamese style artefacts recorded and which are discussed in more detail in Section 7-5.



**Map 7-11** This map shows the distribution of most kitchen-type ceramic artefacts of both Oriental and European styles, and the location of Type 1 Vietnamese bowls.

The European-style artefacts ascribed to the OBM period are listed in Table 7-17. The majority of ceramic finds were classified as Vietnamese and are ascribed to the post-French era because of the context of their location in relationship to the French architectural remains and are discussed later in this chapter. All ceramic photographs

and details including dimensions and more detailed descriptions of decoration, are provided in Appendix D.

**Table 7-17 French ceramic artefacts**

No. of item shown in Table D-1	Item ID	Analytical zone and location where item was identified	Description of ceramic piece
3	5LFS1 C3	SWFZ, 5 Lakes farm site 1	Conjoin two pieces to form partial deep plate, distinctive decoration
5	5LFS1 C5	SWFZ, 5 Lakes farm site 1	saucer
11	CR HS1 C2	CR HS1	white ceramic door knob
12	CR PO Rd C2	CR PO Rd, found on road, not associated with residential site	Partial electricity transmission insulator
17	H.Bany C3	NER, Hôtel Bany, eastern slope	Fragment of bowl, high quality fabric and decoration suggest Chinese manufacture
21	H.Bany C7	NER, Hôtel Bany, eastern slope	Fragment of plate
22	H.Bany C8	NER, Hôtel Bany, eastern slope	Fragment of plate
23	H.Bany C9	NER, Hôtel Bany, eastern slope	Fragment of plate
24	H.Bany C10	NER, Hôtel Bany, eastern slope	Fragment of plate China Ceramics hallmark
25	H.Bany C11	NER, Hôtel Bany, eastern slope	Fragment of plate
26	H.Bany C12	NER, Hôtel Bany, eastern slope	Fragment of plate China Ceramics hallmark
38	SR HS7-8 C1	SR, beside road between house sites 7 & 8	Bowl fragment, porcelain
39	SR HS7-8 C2	SR, between house sites 7 & 8	Partial cup
63	Temple C1	WR, found inside Buddhist temple	Fragment

The first characteristic of the colonial period ceramics recorded over the whole study area is that there are so few. Furthermore, of the fourteen items listed above, six were from a single location adjacent to the Hôtel Bany site (NER), eroding from a bank that is presumed to be a rubbish pit. The recorded assemblage from the Hôtel Bany presents a sample of artefacts from the rubbish pit that included both French and Oriental ceramics. The pit was not excavated, and only a sample of items was recorded. The sample included about half the items visible at the ground surface associated with the rubbish pit. The slopes adjacent to the rubbish pit had numerous ceramic relics, not associated with the small concentration around the rubbish pit.



Except for H.Bany C3 and C7, all items recorded from the Hôtel Bany site were broken plates that include a makers hallmark on the base. The hallmarks included two from French factories, one with a crown and one with a castle. A third plate had a hallmark with a lion and the name China Ceramics (H.Bany C8,9,11). This suggests that Chinese manufactured ceramics in a European style were imported into Indochina in the 1930s or 1940s (see Appendix D, Figures D-1-10).

H.Bany C3 was an Oriental style bowl exhibiting a high quality fabric and complex design suggesting Chinese manufacture. H.Bany C7 is the rim of a dish or bowl with a very distinctive colour rim design, possibly associated with the Ceramic and Bronze Casting Fine Art School, established at Biên Hoà near Saigon in 1907, that was noted for its unusual use of bright colours (Chuong, 2005:63). The only other example of this type of ceramic ware was found in the southwest farm zone 5LFS C2.

The remaining six domestic artefacts were found in different contexts. CR HS1-C2 (a door knob) was found in a residential site in the central zone and probably associated with its original deposition context. The same may be said for the Temple C1 ceramic fragment that was found in the corner of the Buddhist temple site in the western zone which preserved part of a maker's hallmark including the word 'France' (see Figure 7-4 and Appendix D, Figure D-12).

The two items from the southern zone SR HS7-8 C1 and C2, were found in a small drainage gully, half-way between, and on the opposite side of the access road, to the domestic architectural sites SR HS7 and HS8. Their colonial era origins are suggested because one is a partial stoneware cup with vertical sides and made from a high quality white ceramic, in a typical European style. The other piece is a blue-and-white glazed Oriental-style bowl fragment with a complex blue underglaze decoration that is the only example of a fine quality, translucent porcelain found in the Bạch Mã assemblage, which suggests that this also has a Chinese origin given that porcelain was never produced in Vietnam (see Appendix D, Figure D-13). These items are ascribed to the French occupation because they were found together, and because of their high quality. Their provenance suggests that they had been removed from their original context before being discarded.

The two items recorded in the southwest farming zone and ascribed to the French era were found in a clearly Vietnamese context, as part of a small assemblage of artefacts associated with a Vietnamese farming venture, probably dating from the late 1950s or early 1960s. One was a saucer, something not generally associated with Vietnamese use. The other was probably Vietnamese in manufacture, suggestive again of the Biên Hoà style noted in the Hôtel Bany assemblage. They were also associated with about six to ten formed, terracotta roofing tiles from the French era. The farm-site assemblage included a small glass bottle, and the whole assemblage suggested that it may have been a typical shrine associated with the honouring of ancestors that are traditionally located in or adjacent to most Vietnamese households and businesses. It seems possible that the French items were salvaged from a summit villa and recycled in the ancestral shrine.

Finally, two conjoined ceramic artefacts of Japanese origin were recorded during the survey (see Figure 7-30). The Toyo Toki hallmark shows this was a piece of a toilet or wash basin and suggests that these types of ceramics were imported from Japan after 1940 to replace European sources cut off by the war. Its location near a structure not shown on OBM Map 1 suggests its use later than another toilet bowl recorded on the northwest ridge (NWRHS3) that originated in Czechoslovakia. The origin of the latter was probably before 1939 and the German occupation of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent outbreak of war in Europe.

### ***7-5 Historical archaeology of the postcolonial Vietnamese occupation of Bạch Mã Mountain summit plateau: the Vietnamese ceramic phase***

The main material evidence for the Vietnamese occupation phase of the Bạch Mã plateau following its abandonment by the French in 1945, is in the form of ceramic artefacts distributed widely across the study area. Rice bowls were most commonly recorded but pieces of large earthenware storage jars were also recorded in two locations.

Forty-seven ceramic artefacts were defined as Vietnamese based on Lewis's model of colonial ceramic use described in Chapter 5-4. Their general distribution is shown in

Map 7-11. They were classified as Vietnamese if they exhibited at least one of the following characteristics:

- a coarse fabric with numerous sand and pebble inclusions and/or,
- exhibited traditional manufacturing techniques including coil construction of the walls and/or,
- unglazed stacking rings were present inside the bowl (see Appendix D, Figure D14).

Thirty-seven of the Vietnamese ceramics were either complete, partial or fragments of rice bowls, equivalent to the rice bowls used in everyday meals in Central Vietnam nowadays. They have a rim diameter of about 120mm and are commonly decorated with blue underglaze patterns that range from a single line below the rim, to complex scenes and sometimes Chinese characters. One type of bowl, distinguished by its fabric, form of construction and decoration was found more commonly than any other. More than a dozen examples were found across the plateau and were classified as Type 1 bowls (see Figure 7-6). They are described in more detail in Appendix D-2, and their distribution is shown in Map 7-11.



**Figure 7-6 This bowl found at NWRHS3 was the first of more than a dozen bowls or fragments found with similar construction and decoration and referred to as Type 1 bowls.**

As well as the rice bowls, three almost complete earthenware storage jars were recorded at the Five Lakes farm site, and three fragments of similar large jars were recorded between the Sogny villa (SRHS8) and its service building, in the southern zone. Similar storage jars are still in use in rural Vietnamese homes (pers. obs.). The Sogny villa jars may date from the French era.

At first it was assumed that all the Vietnamese ceramics were associated with the main French occupation phase. Four pieces were found associated with ruins of French villas, however, in contexts that clearly post-dated villa occupation. That suggested that the majority of Vietnamese ceramics similarly post-dated the French era because of their association in the Valley site and near SRHS3.

Most of the bowls in Bạch Mã were low quality, many showing lumpy, pebble or sand inclusions in the fabric that penetrate the glaze. Many showed signs of traditional manufacturing techniques, in particular, the use of unglazed stacking rings. A series of ceramic bowls, and fragments, were clearly related in style and manufacture, to the extent that it seems likely that they were made by the same hand and came from a single consignment that was available in the local market. The Vietnamese market in Bạch Mã is recorded as operating for a period in the late 1950s under Ngô Đình Cẩn. More than a dozen pieces of Type 1 bowls, were found across the study area. Four isolated examples were found in residential zones associated with specific residential sites, but post-dating them. Nine were recorded in the southern residential zone in two main clusters. Six were found in the Valley site in a deep gully below the Hôtel Bany. Three were located adjacent to a residential site (SRHS3) in the southern zone. Those recorded at the Valley site and near SRHS3 were part of larger assemblages of Vietnamese ceramics. There were two other types of bowls (Types 2 & 3), distinguished by their patterning, that were found in different parts of the study area. A detailed description of the Type 1, 2 and 3 bowls is given in Appendix D. Table 7-18 shows the distribution of ceramic finds according to analytical zone. The table distinguishes the three repeated Vietnamese types and includes French pieces for comparison.

**Table 7-18 Ceramic items recorded by zone and origin**

Zone	Vietnamese Type 1 bowls	Vietnamese Type 2 and (3) bowls	Total ceramics of Vietnamese origin	French ceramic items	Total No. of ceramic items recorded
NWR	1		1		1
NR					-
NER		1 (1)	8	7	15
CR	1		2	2	4
ER	1		2		2
WR	1		1	1	2
SR	9	3 (1)	22	2	24
Scouts		1	1		1
Col G	1	(1)	6		6
SWFZ			6	2	8
Total	14	8	49	14	63

The valley site is located in a steep, rocky gully below the Hôtel Bany and downstream from the hydrotherapy site, but although the distance is not great, access between these points is difficult. The Valley site is upstream from residential developments in the southern zone. It is included in the southern zone in the table above although the artefacts recorded were quite distinct from any architectural sites. The Valley site consists of an assemblage of nine ceramic artefacts, including four Type 1 bowls or fragments of bowls, two Type 2 bowls and three other bowl types, scattered along about one hundred metres of stream bank and lower slopes. Two small levelled areas, about two by two metres were also noted cut from the lower slope of the hill, as well as a heavily weathered sawn timber billet, about two metres long. The Valley site assemblage suggests that this was a campsite where people were cutting timber and probably collecting other forest resources. The other Vietnamese ceramic items found in association with architectural sites suggest that they were left during episodes of building material recycling at abandoned French residential locations. The number of similar bowls found across the plateau suggests that they were sourced locally, probably from the Vietnamese market which operated for a while from 1957.

The distribution of Vietnamese ceramics suggests that there was a period of recycling French era building materials and cultural resources that accompanied an episode of tree felling and forest resource collection in the late 1950s. Timber harvesting and removal from the summit plateau is only feasible when the road linking the summit to

the coast is passable. This has only been the case on two occasions after its 1938 opening, principally in 1957. Timber was harvested at the summit for building construction during the 1930s and 1940s development of OBM, and probably after the road was reopened for several years after 1957.

Extensive efforts were made to identify the manufacturing origin of Type 1 bowls to try to confirm the period of manufacture but with little success. Local expert opinion in Huế varied and visits to traditional ceramic manufacturing villages in Thừa Thiên - Huế and Quảng Trị Provinces only excluded some possibilities. Type 1 and Type 2 bowls were found in close proximity at the Valley site and at SRHS3. Although both these types of bowls are of low quality, they differ in production technique and decoration style and no doubt manufacturing origin. Most of the Vietnamese bowls recorded were of low quality, and the Type 1 bowls in particular had been made individually using coil construction. The quality suggests that they were used by working class people. It is suggested that they are generally of local manufacture because it is unlikely that items of this quality would be traded far, particularly given the close proximity to the ceramic producers around Saigon and the huge Chinese market that had traditionally traded into Central Vietnam (Chin, 2004; Robequain, 1944:326-7).

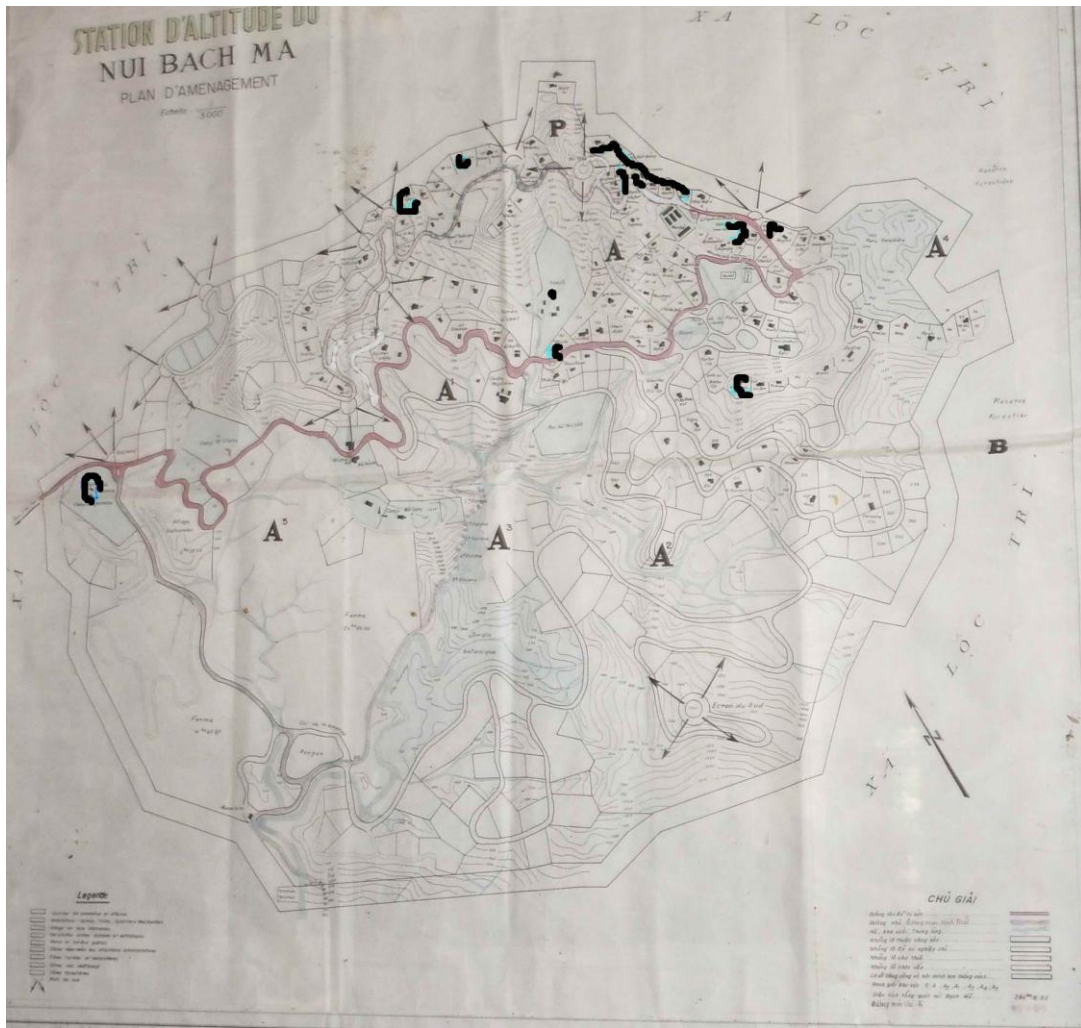
The value of these artefacts to the story of OBM is that they provide an indication of what the Vietnamese were doing at the summit plateau in the late 1950s. Vietnamese ceramics are attributed to the 1957 - 1963 recorded occupation of Bạch Mã Mountain because of their widespread distribution in OBM residential areas, and in the undeveloped forest environments at the summit plateau. They indicate that the Vietnamese used the summit plateau in a very different way to the French. They do not suggest that the Vietnamese were re-occupying the French villas. On the contrary, they seem to signify that the old villas were continuing to be stripped of useful material for recycling off the mountain, at the same time as logging and other forest products, such as orchids and wildlife, were being sourced in other parts of the summit plateau. This period coincides with the reported plans of Ngô Đình Cẩn to reoccupy the French villas.

The nature of these artefacts also gives an indication of the ceramic craft in Central Vietnam. They show that there was little technological development in local industries under the French. This is not surprising because no industry that competed with French exports was supported in French Indochina (Ennis, 1936). Only local craftspeople supplying their local market could survive the colonial trade rules. These artefacts also show strong links with traditional techniques dating back hundreds of years. In discussing the Go Sanh kilns in Bình Định Province south of this study area, Stevenson (1997:45), quoting Trần Kỳ Phương, noted that Central Vietnamese kilns are often thought to be much older than they really are.

### **7-6 Historical archaeology of the Second Indochina War: the evidence by analytical zone**

The archaeological evidence of the Second Indochina War suggests a more prolonged engagement in Bạch Mã than the historical sources indicate. The historical references to the military action that took place on the summit plateau at Bạch Mã Mountain, identified during this study are incomplete and ambiguous. The action in 1965 referred to by a former US soldier who was part of the first US combat team to enter Bạch Mã did not refer to any buildings, but appeared to be an ambush in forest on the lower slopes of the plateau (pers. com., Chuck, 20/7/2006). The US military magazine *Rendezvous with Destiny* of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division of the US Army described an airborne assault of the summit that did not engage directly with the NVA, but did find bases, plans and stores (Higle, 1969). The ambiguous nature of the operational report by the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne (101st Airborne, 1969), and the absence of references to Bạch Mã in the Facts on File series, suggests that much of the war damage was a result of periodic bombing and shelling by the US, rather than front-line confrontation. More detailed research in the US and Vietnam could clarify this point.

The material evidence described in this section falls into two categories, defensive and offensive. It is described firstly within each analytical zone, with references to relevant French villas involved in those zones. Finally there is a more general overview that attempts to outline the basic strategy that is suggested by the material remains. Map 7-11 indicates the general distribution of the main defensive trench networks recorded during the field survey.



**Map 7- 12** This map indicates the main trench and bunker networks recorded on the summit plateau.

### **7-6-1 War remnants in the northwest residential zone**

The most significant outcome of the conflict between US and Vietnamese forces during the 1960s and 1970s, from the archaeological perspective of the present study, was the complete removal of several buildings along the eastern part of the northwest ridge, including De Reddon (Lot 46), Nguyễn V. Nghi (Lot 18), the *Résidence supérieure*, *Travaux Publics* (Lots 20-21), *Cosserat* (Lots 22-23), Lot 24, the *Délégation administrative* building, and Conti (Lot 26). A foot traverse of this area through waist high vegetation, identified a series of levelled building platforms along the ridge, but revealed almost little else, except some building rubble on the slopes below Conti (Lot 26), trenching and bunkers around the area of the *Délégation administrative* lot, and an in-ground water tank on the edge of this same levelled platform. Trenches and bunkers were recorded also at De Laforge (Lot 27,



NWRHS3) and Imbert (Lot 28, NWRHS8). A tunnel was noted running in east under the ridge below the *Délégation administrative* site. Rusty razor wire was noted in several places along trails and down the steep northern slope below De Laforge (NWRHS3).

### **7-6-2 War remnants in the northern residential zone**

The northern residential zone incorporates *Belvedere*, the highest peak of Bạch Mã Mountain, which became Fire-Base Sledge in 1969 during the US assault. The ridge to the southeast of the summit was defended by a series of trenches that ran down the east side of the ridge as far as Martin (Lot 6 NRHS1). Most of the French villas on the ridge had been a source of stone for reinforcing the trenches and bunkers. Branches of the trenches extended to the southwest slope of the ridge where razor wire also defended the slope. Below the main defensive trenches on the southwest slope, three tunnels penetrate under the summit for up to fifty metres. Interpretive signage recently installed by BMNP indicate the tunnels were built by the NVA in the early 1970s. My first visit to the area was in 2003 accompanying a German demining team based in Huế when they destroyed an unexploded shell found on the ridge. During the field survey numerous detonators with Chinese markings were noted on the ridge below the summit.

### **7-6-3 War remnants in the northeast residential zone**

A system of trenches was recorded on a small knoll opposite the Morin Bạch Mã Hotel, an area marked for development on OBM Map 1, as the Lữ quan du khách Hôtel (Travelling Mandarin Hotel). On the opposite side of the road, within Lots 9-10 more trenching was noted, providing cover from both sides of the main access road as it passes the post office (PTT).

### **7-6-4 War remnants in the central zone**

War evidence in the central zone was widespread, but not extensive in quantity. Trenching was noted adjacent to the main access road in lots 130-131, overlooking a small bridge over the stream that runs out of the scout camp. A tunnel was noted adjacent to the villa in Lot 119 (CRHS6), and another tunnel was seen high up in a hill accessed through the Scouts' camp. One villa surveyed (CRHS3) had been completely destroyed, leaving only a crater, and many buildings evidenced small arms fire. Another large crater was noted on the road west of CRHS6.

### **7-6-5 War remnants in the eastern residential zone**

Lot 35 (ERHS1) was destroyed leaving only a crater and the ancillary building. The road outside ERHS3 had been tunnelled under and shored up with building materials. Several alcoves were noted carved into the bank on the edge of the road. Some excavations on the edge of the cutting at ERHS5 may have been protective trenches similar to the alcoves, but had been infilled.

### **7-6-6 War remnants in the western residential zone**

The destruction of the service building behind WRHS3 may have been a consequence of war damage, given its position on the northwest ridge west of the extensive trenching around NWRHS3 and NWRHS8. No trenches or tunnels were recorded in this zone.

### **7-6-7 War remnants in the southern residential zone**

The main war evidence in SR was a series of trenches and bunker around SRHS11 located at the end of a spur running south from the northeast ridge. The marks of bullets in the cement walls of several villas, including, SRHS1, SRHS8 and SRHS12 suggests that action was widespread in the SR.

### **7-6-8 War remnants in the Scouts' camp**

A trench was noted on one of the Scouts' camp sites in the northern part of the training camp. Another tunnel was recorded in the upper slope above the Scouts' camp at the end of a path running up from the trench, about 100 metres below *Belvedere*.

### **7-6-9 War remnants in the Col Girard zone**

The youth camp on top of a small hill had been incorporated into a defended helicopter landing area. The hill top is completely cleared of large vegetation, and surrounded by trenches. The hill top sits about thirty metres above and overlooking the single road access point to the summit plateau. In the saddle adjacent to the road entry point, referred to on OBM Map1 as Col Girard (Girard Pass), in the area occupied by the Vietnamese market, several US army ration tins were found (see Figure 7-7).



**Figure 7- 7 Ration tin found in the Vietnamese market**

#### **7-6-10 War remnants in the southwest farm zone**

No war relics were recorded during the field survey, however, the area is recorded as the crash site of a US helicopter.

#### **7-6-11 Overview of the military relics**

The evidence from the war indicates that the US forces, represented archaeologically by extensive systems of trenches and bunkers, established a base at the summit of Bạch Mã Mountain and a series of defensive positions at strategic points around the summit plateau.

The main defensive points were along the ridges running west and southeast from *Belvedere*, at the entrance to the summit plateau at Col Girard, at the end of a ridge running southeast from the eastern residential zone. A series of buildings immediately west of *Belvedere* were removed completely by bulldozers.

Less extensive trenching was noted adjacent to the main access road overlooking the bridge that spanned the stream that ran through the scout camp. This gully provided shelter immediately below *Belvedere*. Bomb craters were noted in several places in the central and eastern residential zones, and the pockmarks of small arms fire in the walls of villas in all residential zones.

Evidence of the NVA presence is predominantly in the nature of tunnels and alcoves used for shelter. Alcoves are small cuttings big enough to crouch in for shelter, and were noted in several areas that also had bomb craters. At least four tunnels were noted immediately below *Belvedere* and the ridge running to the west. Two are just below defensive barbed wire barricades that still lie along the slopes below *Belvedere*, and these tunnels have recently been recognised by BMNP as important cultural heritage sites with the installation of interpretive signs. In the central residential zone below *Belvedere* a vertical shaft about five to eight metres deep was noted, with a tunnel at the bottom running to the south. On the ridge immediately to the southeast of *Belvedere*, below a cutting that marks the end of the *Franciscains* site, a number of detonators for artillery were noted scattered among the rocks. These had Chinese characters and were doubtless left by the NVA.

The evidence suggests that the US strategy was to hold the summit and ridges that overlook the coastal plain. From there they could send out patrols, or attack with artillery, NVA positions in the central and eastern residential zones. French villas were used for defensive purposes by both sides. The NVA threatened the summit from a series of stream gullies running down from the summit. According to the former US soldier in 2006, positions were often fought over and exchanged (pers. com., Chuck ,20/7/2006). He suggested that when the US troops occupied a tunnel they would have enlarged it.

The management of unexploded ordnance (uxo) is an ongoing problem for the Bạch Mã National Park. Visitors are advised to remain on the marked trails unless accompanied by a staff member. When uxos are identified they are usually destroyed by a demining expert support group based in Huế.

The purpose of documenting the extent of the war remnants from the Second Indochina War is that this was one of the main periods of occupation of the summit plateau and the war relics form part of the cultural heritage of Bạch Mã. It also highlights the impact of the war on the cultural remains of OBM and one of the constraints on present day survey in the area.

## **7-7 Summary of results**

The description of the archaeological record at the Bạch Mã Mountain summit plateau has been presented here in three parts that reflect the three archaeologically expressed occupation phases before the current national park's management of modern tourist infrastructure. The first phase was the French period from 1932-1945 expressed mainly as architectural ruins. The colonial occupation resulted in substantial residential and commercial developments as well as health resort related facilities, most of which were concentrated in the northern half of the plateau. An extensive network of roads and paths provided access to up to 140 buildings. The majority of buildings in OBM were built of stone or concrete and had terracotta tiled roofs. A few timber framed buildings were located in ridge-top sites and in the central residential zone. A very limited sample of ceramic relics from this period was also recorded.

A postcolonial Vietnamese occupation phase is expressed mainly as a scatter of ceramic artefacts, some overlying the French ruins, and it is suggested that this occupation dates from the late 1950s and early 1960s. These Vietnamese ceramics are more widespread across the plateau than the French architectural sites, recorded in both former residential areas and undeveloped areas. Living areas from this period were recognised in several levelled sites in the south of the plateau, in the Col Girard and the southwest framing zones, but these sites have no surviving construction materials to indicate the nature of the dwellings. None were greater than three-by-five metres in area. There is no evidence that the Vietnamese were re-occupying the French villas, but rather the evidence suggests that they were recycling material from the colonial sites for use off the mountain.

The war occupation phase dating from 1963-1975 left its own types of relics as well as impacting the evidence from the earlier phases. The military occupation phase is most clearly visible in the north of the plateau focused on the northern ridge and summit overlooking the coastal plain. In these high altitude areas the military occupation had the most significant impact on the architectural elements from the French occupation phase. There is material evidence relating to both the US and NVA presence during this period, most clearly represented by trenches and bunkers constructed by the US and tunnels and small sheltering alcoves by the NVA.

The current development on the Bạch Mã plateau often emulates the grand architectural styles of the French sixty years earlier. It is, so far, much more constrained than the earlier development. The plateau is also more open to the local Vietnamese population than during the 1940s. The material expression of the earlier occupation phases of Bạch Mã should be a consideration in the planning of future developments on the plateau because they are significant heritage features and an attraction for visitors to BMNP in a region that promotes heritage tourism (Logan, 2005b; Long, 2003).

## **Chapter 8      The place, time and people of Bạch Mã**

### **8-1 Introduction**

This chapter consolidates the archaeological, historical and oral history evidence about the developments and events that occurred on Bạch Mã Mountain plateau between 1930 and 1991. The four objectives of the study introduced in Chapter 1 provide the format for the chapter. They are:

1. To examine how Bạch Mã plateau developed over a series of occupations and abandonments, using archaeology and oral history to enhance the limited documentary record of the place and time. The first part of this chapter, 8-2, will expand upon the data presented in Chapter 7 in order to address a series of issues of spatial organisation related to the material character and development of OBM, and finally to incorporate elements of the oral history into the discussion.
2. The study also aims to frame the development of Bạch Mã plateau within the broader political and social environment to consider the nature and roles of twentieth century hill stations in Indochina and to explore the implications of their development for the maintenance of the French colonial occupation. Chapter 8-3 will relate the development of OBM, and subsequent phases of occupation of Bạch Mã, to the major historical events of the twentieth century that had an impact in Central Vietnam. This leads to the matter of what the material character of OBM, outlined in Chapter 8-2, suggests about the role of hill stations in Indochina last century and what the implications of that might have been to the broader French colonial venture.
3. The study explores the archaeological expression of status and intercultural social relationships in the hill station environment and compares that to the development of colonial policies on intercultural relations. Chapter 8-4 first considers what the spatial orientation of different social groups among the Vietnamese suggests about the nature of inter-cultural social relations in the early 1940s. That is followed by an examination of how French colonial policy is reflected in the spatial organisation of OBM.
4. The study aims to consider what the archaeological and historical record of Bạch Mã plateau 1930-1991 suggests about the Vietnamese peoples' attitudes to the colonial occupation of Indochina. Finally, Chapter 8-5 looks at the

material and oral history evidence of collaboration and resistance among the different social groups during the French occupation, and subsequent to it, to suggest what the Vietnamese perspective was to the colonial system represented by OBM.

The main focus of this study has been on the colonial hill station of OBM before 1945 and the social, economic and political world in which it developed. It has also outlined two subsequent occupation phases of the Bạch Mã plateau. The reason for the inclusion of the postcolonial occupation phases is because they represent elements of the cultural heritage of the place and, perhaps more importantly, the subsequent occupations reflect on aspects of, and attitudes towards, the colonial occupation. In this chapter there is a degree of movement backwards and forwards between the occupations because the later phases help explain aspects of the earlier. But the overall focus remains with colonial OBM and how the different forms of evidence — documentary, material and oral — can be used to explore questions of colonialism not necessarily addressed in the published history. The conclusions and implications from the discussion in this chapter will be addressed in the next and final chapter.

## **8-2 *Archaeology and oral history, the fabric and the memory***

In Chapter 6 it was noted that by 1936 OBM consisted of seventeen wooden cottages scattered along the northern ridges. By 1943, the intensity of development along the ridges and on the adjacent slopes in the central residential zone, shown on OBM Map 1 and in the field survey, suggests that the higher altitude sites were developed before the lower altitude areas in the western and southern zones. This is supported by the distribution of building materials and other structural information more generally. Table 8-1 summarises the distribution of wall structural type by residential zone, including the average area of domestic residential structures by analytical zone. Comparison of the latter figure is problematic because it measures only ground floor areas and at least eight of the domestic structures recorded had at least two levels and another eight were recorded as possibly having a second storey. Furthermore, the numbers of residential sites varies significantly between zones. The central and southern zones each had 24.5% of sites for which a floor area could be determined while the other five zones each had less than ten per cent. Given these limitations on



the comparability of the figures between analytical zones there are still several trends evident from the table.

**Table 8-1. Structure (wall) type by residential zone**

Zone/wall type	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Average area
NWR	2	2	-	-			4	70.3
NR	3	2		-	2		7	68.9
NER	-	2	-	1	-		3	77.8
CR	3	4	-	-	3	2	12	87.9
ER	2	4	1	-			7	50.7
WR	1	1	1	-	1		4	66.7
SR	1	1	2	-	8		12	90.7
<b>Totals</b>	12	16	4	1	14	2	49	
<b>Average area</b>	59.6	80.3	79.8	115.5	86.7			77.9

Wall types: 1-timber, 2-stone, 3-brick, 4-cement bricks, 5-concrete, 6-indeterminate

Of the surveyed villas in all analytical zones, sixty-one per cent used stone and/or concrete compared to 24.5 per cent with timber-framed walls. Brick and concrete-bricks were used in only ten per cent of structures. Table 8-1 shows also that the floor area of timber-framed structures tended to be less than the stone, brick and concrete structures which varied in average area only slightly. The table shows that structures in the central and southern zones tended to be larger, and it was in these zones also where two storeyed structures were more common, and these were mainly built of stone. Timber-framed structures were most commonly recorded in the northwest, northern and central zones, the residential zones developed first and most intensively. It is possible that the timber-framed structure sites recorded in this survey were some of the first buildings constructed at OBM dating from the mid to late 1930s.

The early occupation of the ridgeline sites and the predominance there of institutional buildings, in particular two *Résidence supérieure* structures on the northwest ridge, suggests that the ridges reflected social status. Status was also expressed in the form of construction, specifically, stone-walled villas appear to reflect a higher status than concrete. This is suggested by the fact that of the eight two-storeyed buildings, five were built of stone, so that even if ground floor area was slightly smaller on average across OBM than concrete structures, the actual floor area of many stone villas was greater than the concrete villas. Two of the non-stone, two-storey buildings, one of brick (WRHS3) and one of concrete (SRHS4), appeared to have living space upstairs but neither had surviving evidence of a stairway. Another villa (ERHS3) had the

front wall constructed of stone — the façade with the main entrance — and the three other walls built using concrete. Further, stone walls were generally 400-450mm thick, twice the thickness of most concrete walls at 200-240mm, their solidity projecting strength and power.

Of the forty-three architectural sites in which roofing material was assessed, twenty-one per cent had no evidence of roofing, while the other seventy-nine per cent used terracotta roofing tiles that had been carried to the summit plateau by porters, and many of those had been imported from Hanoi or Hải Phòng in northern Vietnam according to the embossed makers' marks. In Chapter 5-6-1 it was shown that five of the fourteen roofing tile types recorded at architectural sites could be shown to be of local manufacture, that is produced within 150 kilometres of OBM. Table 8-2 summarises the distribution of roofing tiles in analytical zones. Columns shown in bold are local roofing tiles.

**Table 8-2 Roof tile distribution according to residential zone**

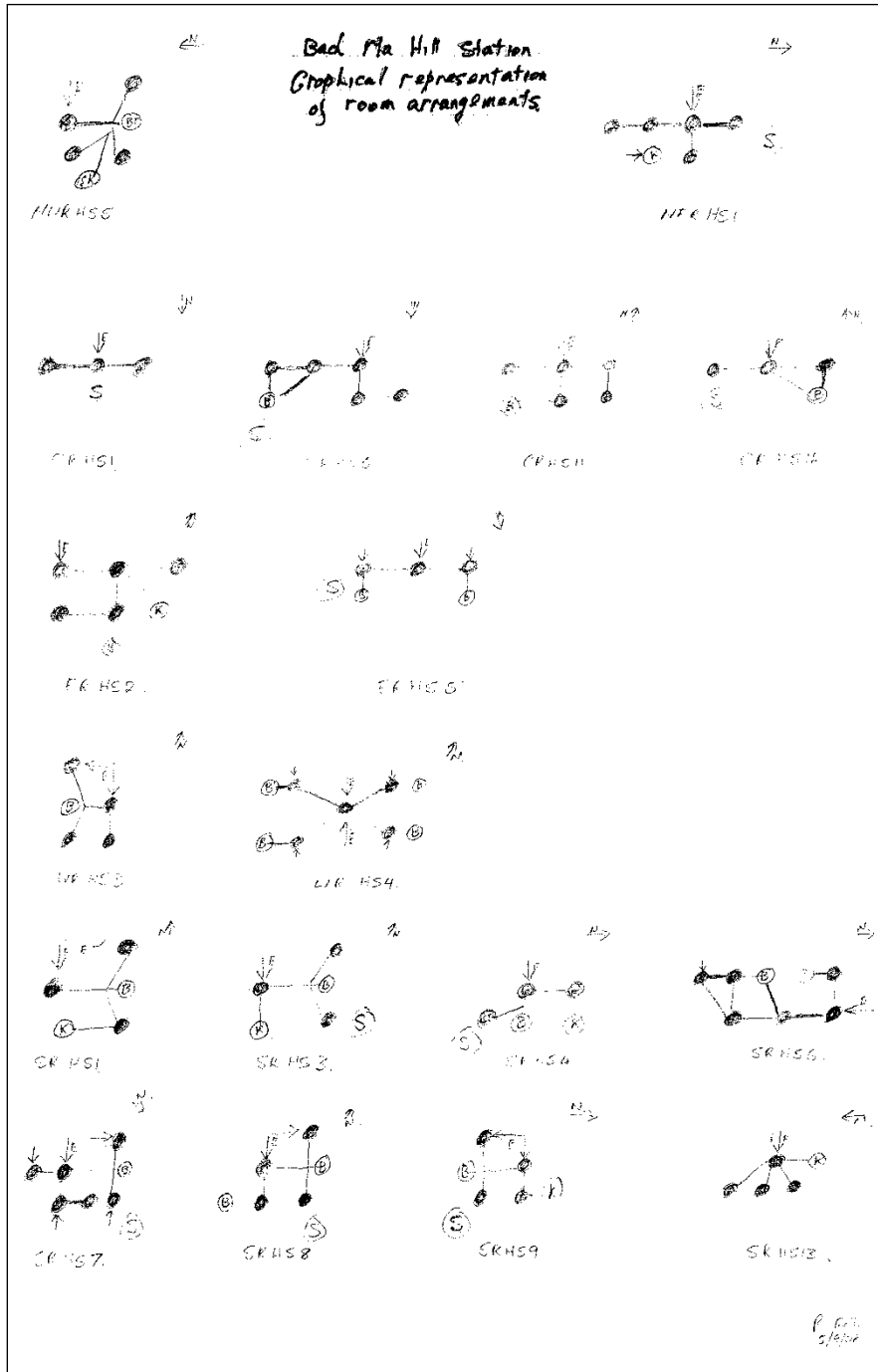
Zone/ Tile type	1	<b>2</b> <b>L</b>	3	4	5	<b>6</b> <b>L</b>	<b>7</b> <b>L</b>	<b>8</b> <b>L</b>	9	10	11	13	<b>14</b> <b>L</b>	Total	% L
<b>NWR</b>	1	<b>2</b>	1	1										5	40
<b>NR</b>	2	<b>2</b>			2						1			7	29
<b>NER</b>	1													1	-
<b>CR</b>	4	<b>2</b>		1	3									10	20
<b>ER</b>	1	<b>2</b>			1	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>						7	71
<b>WR</b>		<b>3</b>				<b>1</b>			1					5	80
<b>SR</b>		<b>3</b>	3	1		<b>1</b>				3		2	<b>1</b>	14	36
<b>Total</b>	9	<b>14</b>	4	3	6	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	1	3	1	2	<b>1</b>	49	

NB: Tile type 1 indicates no roofing material present. Types 2, 6, 7, 8 and 14 were manufactured within 150kms of OBM. See Chapter 5- for explanation of roof tile recording.

The table suggests that there was a greater use of local roofing material in the eastern, western and southern zones. Code 1 indicates that no roofing material was recorded which suggests that roofs were steel or woven-leaf because these two roofing types are unlikely to survive in the archaeological record, as discussed in Chapter 5-6-1. These sites are also located in the northern ridges and central zone, which supports the earlier development suggested for these areas as steel in particular was imported and must have been difficult to obtain by 1943. Similarly, woven-leaf roofs are more likely to be used on timber-framed structures as earlier photos from Bana indicate (Figure 5-4). As WWII progressed, construction at OBM tended to use more local

materials and may have even been a significant market for new local manufacturing ventures as local businesses developed substitutes for previously imported goods. Figure 8-1 presents a summary representation of the room layouts recorded in the different residential zones, employing a method outlined in Chapter 5-8, adapted from Dickens (1977). This graphical representation allows a comparison of room layouts from a series of archaeological sites, side by side on a single page. Figure 8.1 shows eighteen structures from OBM in which the relationship and access between rooms could be determined. Eight of these structures are located in the southern zone, which also indicates that these structures, in many cases, retained more architectural features than those in the ridge-top zones or in the central zone following the widespread destruction of buildings during the military occupation of Bach Mã in the mid to late 1960s. Only in the southern zone were structures recorded that still had some timber window and door frames intact, although heavily weathered. These tended to be those structures furthest from the main access road (for example SRHS1, SRHS3, SRHS6 and SRHS7) (see Appendix C, Figure C-42).

One of the impressions of the villas in the southern zone during the field survey was that there was a much greater uniformity in the style of construction. Most of the surveyed villas used concrete wall construction, but there was also a similarity in the pattern of entry and room layout. This can be seen in Figure 8-1 which shows a similar pattern of entry and room layout in SRHS1, SRHS3, and WRHS3, as well as between SRHS7, SRHS8 and SRHS9. All of these buildings except SRHS3 had more than one door opening onto an entry verandah or porch. In comparison, in other parts of the development there is a greater diversity in construction materials and room layout. The appearance of more than one main entry point to a structure, and more than one bathroom, for example in SRHS6, SRHS8 and WRHS4, suggests that these buildings were designed to accommodate independent, unrelated residents. The room layout at WRHS4 suggests four quite independent residents, but sharing a single central room, perhaps as an entertainment or dining area. The most impressive structure that incorporated a distinctive entertainment area was CRHS5, an impressive stone villa set in an extensive garden with a double-door sized entry off a terrace lined with a balustrade, into a large room with a generous fireplace (see Appendix C, Plan C-21).



**Figure 8- 1 Graphical representation of room arrangements**  
**E - Main entry points; B - Bathroom; K - Kitchen; S - Service building, domestics' accommodation.**

Almost all villas from the French period surveyed had separate accommodation for service staff, generally in a separate building of two or three rooms located several metres from the main house. These service structures were invariably small sized rooms, about three-by-three metres, often incorporating the only cooking space in the villa, indicated by concrete, wood fired stoves found commonly in surveyed sites.

Recorded service buildings were all built of concrete even where the main house was timber-framed or stone (e.g. NWRHS3, NWRHS4, CRHS7, WRHS1, ERHS4). This suggests that concrete walled construction was a cheap and easy form of building. This also introduces to OBM the theme of standardisation of servants' accommodation proposed by Thomas (1998) at the Hermitage plantation in the US. Thomas argued that the standardisation of accommodation provided for slaves introduced another element of order and control into the environment. He also argued that the location of workers accommodation in relation to the plantation owner's residence reflected the owner's perception of status within an hierarchy of class. Service buildings in OBM were generally located behind, and within five or six metres of the main building. Two of the largest villas recorded during the field survey, CRHS5 (Mme Rome), and SRHS6, had service buildings located at least twenty metres from the main building, which suggests that these residents had a perception of a greater than normal distance within the social hierarchy, between themselves and their domestic staff. The size of the house also reflects status, in particular for CRHS5.

### **8-2-1 The character of the hill station changed over time**

At the time the road was opened to the summit in 1938 the majority of existing structures were timber-framed. The nature of the development five years later shows a major change in the pattern of development. From about 1938, new buildings in OBM became bigger, and construction was dominated by concrete and stone with terracotta roofing tiles. Furthermore, as WWII proceeded and imported building materials became increasingly hard to acquire, there was a tendency to use more locally manufactured or acquired building materials, but construction still used concrete and stone for walls almost exclusively, and house size remained relatively large. There also seems to be a trend to greater uniformity in building, both in materials and in villa design. The similarity in layout in later phase construction suggests that this was targeting a particular type of unmet demand within the local French community. It is possible that there was a trend to develop rental properties suitable for single people, perhaps those members of the administration more recently arrived in Annam. Ông Ninh (Thân Trọng Ninh, 2007) referred to the Sogny villa (SRHS8) in the southern zone as possibly a 'project' house, suggesting some sort of investment property.

### **8-2-2 The fabric of OBM suggests something more than a holiday resort**

Holiday resorts are characterised by short-term, transient residence and the accommodation often reflects that, as the buildings did in Bana during the 1920s shown here in Figure 5-2 and Figure 6-1 in Chapters 5 and 6. That was also the nature of the first villas in Bạch Mã, but with the immediate threat and onset of war at the end of the 1930s, the character of buildings changed to increasing formality, durability and size. Clearly, some of these buildings seemed designed for single, unrelated residents. This reflects the French population of Annam which had been dominated by single men for most of the century (Cooke, 1991:274) and these later structures seem to be suitable accommodation for that type of resident on a rental basis, whether transient or long term. But the overall impression of the development of OBM is that its development represents an investment in the long-term French colonial occupation of Central Vietnam.

Another aspect of the residential development is that villas frequently seemed to be positioned within a garden setting. In several cases the areas adjacent to the buildings were terraced, most notably at the *Government Vietnamien* villa on the northwest ridge. This villa was on a small peak and looked east across a series of terraces on the adjacent slope to several neighbouring villas on the ridge. Thân Trọng Ninh in Huế has a copy of a letter detailing the J.E. Vidal residence in the central residential zone. Vidal, a botanist at the Khải Định School in Huế, had identified at least 100 different plants in the compound around his house and had classified (named to genus and in some cases species) more than half. This suggests that Vidal's garden at least was an informal, 'natural' area where native species were considered as specimens. One of the responsibilities of the Vietnamese housekeepers was to maintain house gardens, and many also grew vegetables for sale off the mountain (Ông Hồng & Châu, 2006). Public gardens also formed a significant element in the landscape, for example in the *Parc de la Pierre qui chante* (Park of Singing Stones) where stone retaining walls can still be seen marking garden beds and paths. The gardens help to integrate the villas into their natural surroundings. This was in contrast to life in the city, although many of the French villas there had walled gardens, and Huế is renowned for its classical Vietnamese gardens. It reflects the emphasis in Decoux's National Revolution, that a 'return to the soil' was essential to combat the ills of urban life.

### **8-2-3 Activities were carried on at Bạch Mã not recorded in the history**

There are two aspects of the material record not mentioned in the documented record of 1943 that suggest that Bạch Mã was a site of innovation. The first supports unrecorded local tradition that suggests a small hydroelectric scheme was in operation at OBM before 1945. The second refers to the structure adjacent to the Hôtel Bany interpreted as a hydrotherapy facility. It is documented that war shortages encouraged innovation in the provision of import substitutes in Indochina. By 1943, for example, Indochina was self sufficient in quinine production for the first time (Hammer, 1954:32).

When talking about her work as a porter, Bà Bờ mentioned that kerosene was one of the heaviest things to carry. No doubt this also became increasingly difficult to procure as WWII progressed. She said that there was no electricity in OBM but that people used kerosene for lighting. Two broken ceramic cable insulators were found during the field survey, one on the slope below the northwest ridge and the other in the central residential area, both well beyond, and in different directions from, the military camp where Bà Bờ mentions a telephone was located that connected the summit to an office at the base of the mountain. Above the waterfall in the southwest of the plateau, there is the remnant of a dam wall across the stream, and another possible dam wall was noted in the stream bed about 300 metres downstream from the Scouts' camp. These suggest that the French were controlling the stream-flow at these points for some purpose. Emmanuel Niesdrist, who worked on the building of the Scouts' camp in 1937, was an electrical engineer who managed the electrical system in Huế, and his Scouting colleague, Tạ Quang Bửu, was also a French trained electrical engineer (Toán, c. 2001:24). There was certainly the expertise associated with the Bạch Mã plateau able to develop a local hydroelectricity power scheme. The two ceramic insulators suggest that this was in operation before the abandonment in 1945. As with other materials, it is likely that these stoneware glazed ceramic insulators were difficult to procure toward the end of the war and may only have been used where a power line could not be strung through the trees.

The other feature that suggests that OBM was a site of innovation is the structure built in the stream below the Hôtel Bany, interpreted here as a hydrotherapy feature.

Jennings (2006:178) noted that health resorts, especially those offering hydrotherapy treatments, were a fundamental feature of French imperialism. The spas of Vichy in central France became the principal focus for colonialists returning to the *metropole* for recuperation or for retirement. The primary purpose of the hill stations in Indochina was as *stations climatique* (Gaide, 1931), climate stations where the cool air of the mountains was the principal therapeutic attraction. Jennings (2006:53) suggested that the lack of appropriate geology limited the development of hydrotherapy treatments in Indochina, so that colonialists had to travel to neighbouring Asian countries to find thermal mineral springs similar to Vichy. But Jennings (2006:41) also noted that hydrotherapy incorporates a range of practices designed to benefit the body. He lists ‘drinking mineral waters at the source ..., mud baths and wraps, pulverisations and other intense shower devices, and a number of more intrusive practices’ that were developed around the empire to combat the effects of living in a tropical climate. Jennings (2006:47) quoted an Edmond Vidal who explained the mechanism by which mineral water ingestion operates to cleanse the body. ‘Thanks to its isotonic qualities, Vichy waters ... penetrate under pressure into cells, where they undertake a veritable cleansing, taking with them toxins’.

The structure below the Hôtel Bany (see Appendix C, Figures C-21, 22) is built in the middle of the stream and rather than restricting the water flow like a dam, the rear stone wall creates a small waterfall about two metres high. It seems possible that this was designed to create that intense shower needed for a pulverisation hydrotherapy treatment. There are several pools and cascades in the streams on the plateau, but they generally flow over rocks so that it is not possible to experience that pulverisation effect in the natural pools. It would be interesting to look for similar facilities in the other hill stations in Indochina. It was mentioned in Chapter 7-4-3 that Vietnamese people visiting the Bạch Mã plateau sometimes still collect spring water for its reputed medicinal value.

These two aspects of the material culture of OBM, neither mentioned in the *Indochine* article of 1943, support the suggestion that OBM was the subject of innovative development and investment. Again, this type of innovative development and investment suggests that the French community was developing OBM with a long-term vision in which electricity was available that had only begun to become available for public distribution from the mid 1920s. By the beginning of WWII, electric power



had only become available in the major urban centres and although the potential for hydroelectricity had been recognised, its exploitation was still ‘microscopically small’ (Robequain, 1944:285-6). This focus on innovation supports the suggestion that the development of OBM was intended as much more than a holiday resort.

#### **8-2-4 What does the material character of OBM suggest about the colonialism the French were trying to create during WWII?**

Marr (1980:113) suggested that during WWII French administrators had the single objective of maintaining the colonial system until the end of the war. Because they were so acutely aware of their vulnerability they were even more ruthless in their treatment of indigenous dissent, and more supportive of the indigenous elite. Marr (1981:34) interpreted their weekend trips to hill stations as part of their trying to maintain as normal a pattern to their lives as possible amidst growing pressure and uncertainty. Jennings (2001:136) also saw the hill stations of Indochina, ‘chosen for their gentle “metropolitan climate”’ as a normal, ongoing part of the French expatriates’ luxurious colonial lives.

The hill stations of Indochina, however, had not been a normal part of the lives of many French people before the war. They were generally hard to get to because roads were hardly finished before the war was on their doorsteps. Development accelerated at Đà Lạt after WWI, however, the road was not finished until 1930 and the rail line in 1933 (Robequain, 1944:61, 94). The luxurious Lang Bian Palace Hotel in Đà Lạt closed between 1934 and 1937 because it was uneconomic (Jennings, 2003:188). Đà Lạt, Indochina’s premier hill station, had not been incorporated into many colonial lives before WWII. The rapid development of the hill stations during the Japanese occupation suggests that they offered an additional, luxurious aspect to the colonial lives of the French. This was not simply the maintenance of an existing luxurious lifestyle, during WWII they were constructing a lifestyle for the future. The character of the development suggests that it is possible the French planned OBM as a new administrative summer capital for Annam, similar to the provincial summer capitals of Darjeeling and Poona. There are no clearly administrative buildings in OBM, but neither were there in Đà Lạt before WWII. The government proposed to convert the uneconomic Palace Hotel into an administrative facility during the 1940s (Jennings, 2006:188). Like Đà Lạt, OBM Map 1 refers to an administrative zone, probably on

the northwest ridge that was occupied by several government structures. The material character of these buildings could not be recorded during the field survey for this research because they had been either destroyed during the Second Indochina War or were completely overgrown.

The French wanted to create in OBM a colonial space that recalled the landscape and climate of home, separated from the majority Vietnamese community. That had always been a function of colonial hill stations (Kennedy, 1996). The buildings reflect European styles and therefore distinguish the French from the Japanese as well. The architecture reflected social status within the colonial community in the nature of construction and relative position in the landscape, as Burke (1999) had found in Armidale. OBM was a symbol of their French ethnic and cultural difference, and superiority. OBM also symbolised the French relationship with the environment in two ways. At once it represents French mastery of a relatively hostile environment that had never been occupied by the Vietnamese ethnic Kinh majority. Conklin (1997) noted the French emphasis on their mastery of the colonial environment. It also represents the return to the soil advocated in the National Revolution, reflected most clearly in the public and private gardens of OBM.

#### **8-2-5 The postcolonial material heritage suggests the Vietnamese used the landscape differently from the French**

The staff historical-notes of the Bạch Mã plateau, record that Ngô Đình Cẩn, brother of Ngô Đình Diệm, President of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), planned to redevelop some of the old French villas to entertain his colleagues in the late 1950s. However, as Lê Hữu Con said, the reconstruction of the road to the summit in 1957 was not well done so that access to the plateau must have been again restricted, probably within a few years.

The main evidence of the Vietnamese reoccupation of the plateau is in the widely distributed ceramic bowls. The Vietnamese ceramic bowl assemblage represents the material culture of working class or agricultural peasants who were present at Bạch Mã. But they were not there to reoccupy the French villas. The material culture of the French had a monetary value in Huế and Phú Lộc Town. It also had a symbolic significance, representing the inequality and the detachment of the colonial elite from

the lives of the majority. The Vietnamese were still not interested in living on the mountain, but when access to the plateau allowed, the local people were ready to take advantage of the resources available, and carried off anything that could be sold or used.

### **8-2-6 The pattern of damage from the war suggests that a lot of the cultural heritage from the French period had been recycled before the war**

The photo of a largely intact, but damaged house that is reproduced here in Figure 5-3 was apparently taken in Bạch Mã in 1969. This photo suggests that at least some of the villas were largely intact at that time. This is supported by the BMNP staff historical notes. However, during the field survey there was almost no evidence of timber windows and doors, or roof frames. Roofing tiles were often found distributed across a building site, for example at ERHS4 where terracotta tiles covered the concrete floor slab that itself was covered with intact, cement floor tiles. There were no remnants of roofing timber between the two layers. If the destruction had been the result of bombing or something equivalent it seems probable that there would be a significant residue of broken window frames and shutters, wall-frame and roofing timber. Referring to ERHS4 again, a timber framed house, there was some broken window glass on one side of the house. There was also a broken toilet bowl and wash basin beside the house. There was no charcoal recorded so that fire was not an issue in the destruction of the house. Fire was not an aspect of the destruction of any of the villas surveyed. It seems more likely that the roof tiles were simply removed and dropped in order to access the sawn timber frames. The one house where a remnant roof timber remained (CRHS12, Appendix C-4) suggested that several large roof beams had been sawn through at one end.

Certainly, some construction material from the villas was still present in 1969 and some of this appears in the trenches and tunnels, used to shore up the walls and roof. The widespread absence of doors, windows, wall and roof frames except in a few houses in the southern most parts of the residential development, suggests a much more systematic collection and recycling of material had operated before the bombing began in 1966. The one place where structural timber was noted was at the Scouts' camp where heavily weathered sawn timber was stacked beside three of the levelled tent sites. Scout leaders mentioned some refurbishment of the camp in 1960. This

shows that structural timber has survived and is recognisable. It is the general lack of damaged structural building elements and fittings amongst the war damage, combined with the oral history, that suggests recycling began in 1945 soon after the French were imprisoned by the Japanese and that most material had been removed before the Second Indochina War impacted Bạch Mã. That suggests that the Vietnamese ceramics are linked to the widespread recycling of cultural material of all types before war damage extended across of the plateau.

It seems possible that there was an emotional factor involved in the recycling process. As Dawdy (2006) noted in her study of the re-creation of an archaeological record in the post 2005 New Orleans reconstruction, it seems possible that the de-construction of French villas in Bạch Mã was an emotional reaction, firstly to the final abandonment of Vietnam by the French in 1955-6, but also to the activities of Ngô Đình Cẩn. Cẩn it seems was at least as corrupt as his brother who headed the South Vietnamese Government in Saigon. Cẩn seems to have been trying to recreate the French colonial environment in Bạch Mã. The removal of roofs, windows and doors from the French villas by the local people, seems to be an act of resistance to the re-introduction of past colonial injustices. After eight years of fighting the French, the Vietnamese people were not going to allow the conservative elite, some of whom had collaborated with the French and the Japanese (Ngô Đình Diệm was part of the pro-Japanese government of Trần Trọng Kim in 1945), to simply take over that which the French had previously held.

### **8-2-7 Oral history highlights**

Interpretation of the oral history was constrained by the cultural and linguistic gap between the interviewees and myself, and the fact that translations of the interviews did not become available until almost two years after the interviews. It was not possible, therefore, to clarify some of the suggestive references that Bà Bờ makes about the French in Bạch Mã in 1945, details about the fortress she said the French were building at Tam La, or how many French people died at Satadour, and how and why. The most important outcome of the oral history may be in the information about the general attitudes towards the development of OBM by the local community. The economic benefits extended far beyond the community of Cầu Hai to many villages between Huế and the Hải Vân Pass. The scale of development achieved between

1938 and 1943 supports Bà Bờ's comments that thousands of local people were employed at Bach Mã. This should be seen in the context that Annam had seen very little economic development under the colonial occupation. For many villagers, the development of OBM was the first and probably only opportunity they had to generate a cash income.

The oral history also highlights the gap between the French and the Vietnamese working class/peasantry. The village people in Cầu Hai saw the French pass by but there was little direct contact. Few French people spoke Vietnamese and few Vietnamese villagers spoke French, although some learnt during these few years. The oral history refers to local Vietnamese contractors who employed the porters, tree fellers, quarrymen and builders. The best paying job was that of carrying French people to the plateau by *chaise*. Bà U recalled a rare occasion when a French woman on a *chaise* understood her porters' conversation and refused to pay when they arrived at the plateau because of the things they had been saying about her.

In contrast to their relationship with the French, the Vietnamese community provided moral and material support to each other. When a villager went to work as a housekeeper, or on a timber-getting or rock-quarrying project, family members also became involved. Family members carried and prepared food for the workers. As well there was a real danger from wild animals along the mountain road, so that people carrying goods to the plateau often travelled in groups of forty or fifty, singing and joking as they went. The long walk allowed plenty of time to work out ways to take advantage of the contractors.

The oral history brings a personal and human touch to the story of OBM. One can see the scale of the development in the ruins scattered through the forest on the plateau, and one can see that a lot of work went into it. Through the oral history it is possible to see past the grand French stone villas to the Vietnamese villagers who quarried the stone, carried the tiles and cement, and looked after the gardens. That is the value of the oral history.

### **8-3 *Bach Mã in historical context***

The second objective of this study was to examine the development and role of OBM in the broader political and social environment. OBM's development, from conception to abandonment, happened over a period of thirteen years and the majority of construction occurred in just five years, between 1938 and 1943. The following paragraphs will summarise the history detailed in Chapter 2 to emphasise that the whole period of development was one of increasing anxiety and threat for the French. The nature of OBM and the other hill stations, based on the comparisons here between Bạch Mã, Bana and Đà Lạt, suggests that the hill stations of Indochina were constructed as refuges in more than one sense. They were refuges from the climate initially, but increasingly also from the Vietnamese, from the Japanese, and from the rest of the world.

The 1920s had been a time of considerable economic development in Indochina. Hardy (1998:808) noted that between 1924 and 1930 French investment in Indochina was almost six times the level in the twenty years leading up to the end of WWI and the number of companies operating in Indochina had trebled in the decade. Despite this level of development, the Vietnamese were increasingly dissatisfied with French rule, so that during 1926 there was a 'clamour for independence' from all elements of Vietnamese society (Ennis, 1936:184) reflected in part in a growing number of popular nationalist movements (Hall, 1970:763-4). The socialist Governor-General Varenne was withdrawn because he was seen as too lenient with the indigenous opposition (Ennis, 1936:186). The empire was near its peak and the French response, through a new policy of association which suggested a recognition and respect for another culture, was to provide architectural symbols of Indochinese autonomy rather than any meaningful, political independence (Wright, 1997:333).

Vietnamese dissatisfaction burst asunder in 1930, sparked by the Yen Bay massacre in February and the harsh French response as 'French troops ranged through the countryside, bombing, shooting and arresting' (Hammer, 1954:83). The years 1930 and 1931 were a turning point, both for French imperialism and Vietnamese nationalism. The first, 1930 became known as the year of the Red Terror and 1931, the year of the White Terror, years of blood and retribution (Hammer, 1954:85). That was followed by the economic crisis, the Great Depression, and French reluctance to ease their tax policies. European prestige was at a low ebb among all classes of the

Vietnamese population (Ennis, 1936:135). French colonists were experiencing increasing anxiety for their own security so that this ‘was a period when fear among the French community came close to dominating all feelings and attitudes’ (Osborne, 1976:18).

Governor-General Pasquier in the early 1930s sought to rebuild social order through the encouragement of private property ownership, the development of agriculture through irrigation projects and the opening of fertile land to agricultural development (Ennis, 1936:191). A new Emperor, Bảo Đại, was installed on the throne in Huế in May 1932, the first Vietnamese monarch to have a French education and upbringing. He was presented as a model of east-west harmony, European educated but upholding traditional Vietnamese values (Marr, 1981:69). But his role was purely symbolic and Bảo Đại soon became frustrated with his own political impotence.

It was against this background that Girard surveyed Bạch Mã in July 1932 and found it suitable for a hill station. The following year the first ‘modest chalet’ was established and in 1934 a path to the summit suitable for a *chaise* was opened (Anon., 1943). There was a boom economic year in Saigon in 1935 (Vien, 1993:210) and by 1936 the economy generally was beginning to recover (Marr, 1981:7). By the end of 1936 there were already seventeen wooden villas on the northern ridge of Bạch Mã Mountain, and development began on the Scouts’ camp.

The reasons for French anxiety at the beginning of the 1930s steadily increased during the decade. The threats to their colonial authority were numerous and real, and stemmed from both internal and external forces. The internal threats to French hegemony were linked to larger outside forces, the demands for independence beginning with self-rule that had been growing across the colonial world since the end of WWI. Independence struggles in many countries were supported by the increasing influence of international communism. These pressures were present and growing in Indochina and encouraged by the ICP which formed in 1930 from several rival, revolutionary groups (Duiker, 1981:32). Japan’s industrial growth, free of a European colonial master, had been an example for many Vietnamese intellectuals, but as the 1930s developed, the Japanese model operating in China looked too much like an Asian version of European colonialism (Marr, 1981:118).

It was the Japanese that presented the most prominent and growing external threat to the French. The Japanese occupied Manchuria in 1931 and established the region of Manchukuo based around Shanghai in northeast China in 1932 (Hook, 1973:191-2). In 1937 Japan's open attack on China was accompanied by a direct threat against Indochina to close its supply route into western China via the Haiphong – Yunnan rail line. The growing threat from Japan was one factor that barred any moves towards greater autonomy in Indochina during the French Popular Front Government which included anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and communist members (Aldrich, 1996:118). It was in this environment that the road to Bạch Mã was completed in 1938, and a new era of development began. Europe continued its descent into war during 1938 and 1939, further highlighting the anxiety of the French.

The threats from Japan in relation to the northern border were exacerbated by threats from Thailand on the western border of French Indochina. The Japanese threat eventually crystallised into occupation of Tonkin following the capitulation of the Third Republic Government in Paris in June 1940. Governor-General Decoux was, however, able to negotiate with the Japanese for the maintenance of the French colonial administration in Indochina. The continuation of French administration in Indochina was confirmed in July 1941, but at the cost of Japanese occupation throughout the country. By the end of the year the Japanese launched the war in the Pacific from their Southern Region headquarters in Saigon. The years 1941 and 1942 were relatively stable in Indochina as the Japanese expansion reached its limit in Southeast Asia. But in all the other countries that the Japanese occupied in Southeast Asia, they immediately overthrew European colonialists. Development reached its peak in OBM in 1942. The year 1943, however, saw the tide of war reversed as the allied forces in Asia and the Pacific began their military and naval advance towards Japan. Now the threat of invasion in Indochina was from the allies. By 1943 Indochina was the only French colony still unoccupied by the allies and still supporting the Vichy government. The Japanese increased the pressure on the Decoux administration for increased concessions and support by their political support of Vietnamese nationalist groups in 1943 and by declaring independence in Burma, the Philippines and Indonesia, but still retained the French in administrative control in Indochina. Development at OBM slowed now because of the difficulty in obtaining materials. It must have been in late 1944 or early 1945 that, according to



Bà Bờ, Cầu Hai villagers were forced by the French to carry bricks for the construction of two ‘fortresses’, one on the plateau of Bạch Mã Mountain and one on the road through Cầu Hai. No archaeological evidence was found, however, that these were built.

The French may have been aware of the approaching *coup de force* in early March 1945 but did little to counteract it (Nitz, 1983:342-3). At that time it seems there were some thousands of French people in Đà Lạt and Tam Đảo, although this was well outside the summer season from May to September, when the hill station hotels advertised their availability (Jennings, 2003:190; Marr, 1995:108). The hill stations immediately became prisons for the French taking refuge there after the Japanese *coup* in March 1945. The details of events in OBM are not clear, but Hammer notes that the French garrison at Huế was one of very few who fought back during the *coup* and some of the troops escaped into the nearby hills to try to join up with the Free French resistance (Hammer, 1954:40). Bà Bờ also suggested that a number of French people tried to escape from Bạch Mã but were killed on the trail to Truôi.

The roles, the character, and even the symbolism of Indochina’s hill stations were shaped by political and economic events both within and outside the colony during the first half of the twentieth century. Governor-General Doumer recognised the need for climate relief centres for the French expatriate population in Indochina at the end of the nineteenth century. Several suitable sites were identified, however, initial development was very slow. By the mid 1920s Bana had less than twenty buildings, most built of wood and woven-mats. By the end of the 1920s international air travel and developments in tropical disease treatment and prevention had reduced the expatriate population’s need for climate relief stations. But from the 1930s the political atmosphere for the French colonists in Indochina was one of growing threat that continued throughout the development of OBM. As the threats grew the structures built in the hill station became more substantial, providing a physical as well as an emotional barrier between the French and the Vietnamese majority, the Japanese, and as the war went on, the rest of the world. The perception of hill stations as refuge fortresses was strengthened by their position on a mountain top, separated from their enemies by the forest filled with wild animals, like an impenetrable void.

They were planned to be self contained and self-sufficient, but when the inevitable *coup* eventuated they proved to be of little help.

#### **8-4 The archaeological expression of social relationships in Bach Mã, and French policy**

Four aspects of the hierarchical and intercultural social relationships are examined in this section with reference to the spatial organisation and architectural fabric of OBM and the oral history. These are:

- the relationships between the French and the Vietnamese working class;
- the relationship between the French and their Vietnamese domestic staff;
- the relationship between the French and the Vietnamese elite; and,
- the relationship between the Vietnamese elite and their domestic staff.

It is in the spatial organisation among the Vietnamese elite that, I suggest, it is possible to detect a shift in colonial policy during the development of OBM.

The segregation of the working class Vietnamese from the French and elite Vietnamese is represented in the oral history and is documented in OBM Map1. Bà Bờ mentioned that the Vietnamese villagers who carried their loads to the summit were not allowed to stay in OBM. They usually returned to Cầu Hai after checking in their loads of tiles, cement or kerosene. Sometimes they stayed with friends in the military camp because most of the colonial militia were working class Vietnamese who had been conscripted into the force, overseen by French officers. The officers no doubt stayed at the Armée villa when in OBM, while the Vietnamese and foreign troops lived in the military camp under canvas. The military camp provided a buffer between the urban development of OBM and the Vietnamese village and market located adjacent to the point where the mountain road from Cầu Hai enters the plateau at Col Girard. In fact, the military camp was less than 200 metres distant and directly overlooked the Vietnamese village, separated by a fairly steep gully. There is a clear perception here that the military camp not only separated the Vietnamese working class from the elite, but the colonial army were in a position to constantly observe the activities of the Vietnamese in the village and market. This seems to create the same situation that the colonial planters created with their slaves in antebellum plantations in North America and the Caribbean (Delle, 1999b; Orser, 1988). As Giddens (1984)

recognised, the surveillance of the military, and the perception that surveillance was constant, was intended to instil cooperative behaviour in the Vietnamese working class.

Domestic staff working in the villas were segregated from the villa residents, and from the neighbours' domestic staff. Thirty recorded villas had a separate building that consisted of from one to four rooms, sometimes including a kitchen and toilet. Nine recorded villas did not have separate quarters for the staff, or a separate building could not be identified because of vegetation regrowth or because it had been destroyed. The LeBris residence (NWRHS5) had a small bedroom and kitchen in a lean to on the back of the villa. All other domestics' quarters identified were separate from the main house. The almost universal standardisation of segregation of domestic staff was partly a consequence of French elitism; but more significantly the French feared the Vietnamese for two main reasons. They feared them politically and although the hill stations were intended in part to provide a refuge from the increasingly defiant majority, Jennings (2003:178) mentioned that in Đà Lạt in the early 1930s, a communist ring was rumoured to have operated out of the kitchen of the Palace Hotel. Even in Đà Lạt the French were in fear of a communist plot against them. The French also feared the Vietnamese as a source of disease and infection (Cooper, 2001:145). Segregation of domestic staff was commonplace. Each villa housed its own domestic staff. This also served to segregate the domestic staff from that of the neighbours. The only alternative accommodation for Vietnamese workers was in the Vietnamese village at Col Girard, two kilometres from most of the villas. Planning for OBM did not allow opportunities for Vietnamese domestic staff to live together, or even to congregate, except at the market which could be easily observed. Racial segregation had been a fundamental aspect of planning for Đà Lạt undertaken by Hébrard in the 1920s in the spirit of 'association'. In the following decade association based on the recognition and respect for indigenous culture, increasingly sought the cooperation of conservative notables, in particular those who had a French style education and up-to-date qualifications, but there was never a relaxation of segregation rules regarding the working class (Jennings, 2001:134). In OBM, there was also a physical, geographical distinction between classes. The 'loyal' domestic house staff was provided housing adjacent to the main house. The standardisation of accommodation provided suggests a widespread French perception of the position of

these people within the social hierarchy. The working class, however, were excluded entirely from the French residential area, further segregated by the military camp. As Thomas (1998) noted for US planters, the colonialists in OBM defined geographically their perception of class differences among the Vietnamese.

Of the seventy-two sites that are listed with private names on OBM Map 1, ten are Vietnamese. That is about fourteen per cent of private lots appear to have been taken up by Vietnamese families. The villas occupied by the Vietnamese elite are distributed throughout OBM, in all residential zones except the northeast zone which includes most of the commercial and recreational centre of OBM. The greatest number of Vietnamese lot owners is in the northern ridge area where four Vietnamese families occupied some of the most outstanding lots in OBM, adjacent to Belvedere with extensive views across the coastal plain. Seven Vietnamese owned villas were recorded during the field survey, although recording of three on the northern ridge was limited to wall type because of the extent of destruction and the risk of unexploded ordnance. Table 8-3 summarises the nature of these structures.

**Table 8-3 Vietnamese owned villas, construction details**

Survey Reference No.	Name shown on OBM Map 1.	Wall structural type	Floor area m <sup>2</sup>	Roofing Tile Type
NR HS3	Tôn Thất Quảng	5		3
NR HS4	Hồ Đắc Khôi	2		3
NR HS5	Đồ Phong	2		11
CR HS1	Hồ Đắc Điềm	5	92.4	1
CR HS12	Thân Trọng Khôi	2	94.5	5
ER HS5	Hồ Đắc Di	2	86	2
SR HS1	Diu	5	84.5	3

Of the seven recorded Vietnamese owned villas, four had granite stone walls, and three had concrete walls, and the four that could be measured had floor areas at least of average size or above. At least three Vietnamese villas incorporated aspects of traditional Vietnamese design, at the same time reflecting elements of French construction in their choice of building materials. The high number of Vietnamese villas on the northern ridge indicates that these were very high status individuals or families, and were among the early private residential developments in OBM. Đồ Phong Cúc said in her oral history that her family's house at Lot 2, directly adjacent

to *Belvedere*, was built in 1938 and the adjacent structures were probably completed within a year of that, before the war and certainly before the beginning of Decoux's administration.

Đang *et al.* (2004:137-139) noted that traditional Vietnamese architecture in Central Vietnam developed specific elements under the Nguyễn dynasty, while retaining many of the features of traditional houses in the northern delta areas. Under French colonial influence the use of concrete and brick became much more common in preference to wood. The main house in traditional Vietnamese architecture has a symmetrical layout along the main axis. In Central Vietnam houses generally had three main rooms under the main roof, while in the north they may have had three or five rooms under the main roof. Auxiliary rooms were added as wings or lean-tos. The central compartment was used for worshipping the Buddha and the Ancestors, and the three main rooms were usually reserved for receiving guests and for men to sleep (Đang, Phuong, & Vân, 2004:137).

The villas of Hồ Đắc Diễm (CRHS1) and Hồ Đắc Di (ERHS5) were the best preserved Vietnamese owned villas recorded during the field survey, and both incorporated traditional Central Vietnamese architectural layouts described by Đang *et al.* (2004:139). Both have a symmetrical layout with three main rooms under the main roof (see Appendix C, Figures C-18 & C-32, and also Figure 8-1 in this chapter). Both have an aspect facing the south. The Hồ Đắc Di house has two small bathrooms attached to the back of the two rooms adjacent to the central room, but this conforms to the traditional style as auxiliary rooms attached as lean-tos. Both have separate service buildings, indistinguishable from the service buildings associated with the French villas. This room layout is quite distinct from any of the French room layouts represented in Figure 8-1, and suggests the maintenance of traditional material cultural values among those Vietnamese who were significantly integrated into the French colonial administration before 1945. The facades of these buildings do not seem to reflect Vietnamese architectural elements. However, the structure of Hồ Đắc Khôi (NRHS4), one of the three villas built in OBM by this same family, used a traditional Vietnamese window treatment (see Appendix C, Figure C-15), and had a bend in the staircase leading from the main access road to the villa, typical of Vietnamese entries that avoid direct entry for reasons explained through feng shui.

As Delle (1999a) recognised in the tower houses of Munster, these people were displaying elements of French cultural influences, while rejecting the adoption of the French spatial geometry in their domestic living space.

These two Hồ Đắc brothers had eminent careers during the colonial era. The elder brother Hồ Đắc Diễm gained a Doctor of Laws degree in Paris in 1925 and later became the first Vietnamese to teach at the Law School in Hanoi. By March 1945 he was Governor of Hà Đông Province. After 1945, however, Diễm joined the revolution and became a law department manager and the president of the IVth Inter-Regional Tribunal (Hồ Đắc Family History, nd). His younger brother Hồ Đắc Di, completed his primary education in Huế and secondary school in Hanoi. He went to France to study after World War I where he gained a doctorate in medicine and later returned to teach and practice surgery in Hanoi, and in the 1930s contributed to research into local diseases. Di was apparently an old friend of Hồ Chi Minh from his days in Paris, and he also joined the revolution after 1945 and became Director of Medicine and Pharmacy, and several other managerial positions in the Hồ Chi Minh communist government (Hồ Đắc Family History, nd).

Most of the structures in OBM are residential dwellings, mostly in a private setting, separated from their neighbours by elements of the landscape and often private gardens. Some are clearly designed for entertainment, for example the villa of Mme Rome (CR HS5 see Appendix C-4). But most villas were more modest, principally domestic dwellings, suggesting that most social interaction took place in public spaces, such as the ‘Park of Singing Stones’, *Belvedere*, cafes, probably in the garden of the Hôtel Bany, and possibly as well at the swimming pool and hydrotherapy facility.

The Vietnamese-owned dwellings are distributed throughout the urban development. There appears to be no segregation of the elite Vietnamese from the French community. The main links within the elite Vietnamese community appear to be through family ties. The Hồ Đắc and Thân Trọng families, with links to the royal family, make up roughly fifty per cent of the Vietnamese owned residences (Thân Trọng Ninh, 2006). Within these families there was a wide variation in professions as well as work locations. Several worked in Tonkin, so their presence in OBM is linked

to family and birthplace rather than institutional affiliation, or the wider elite Vietnamese community.

Segregation was not new to colonial life under Decoux's pro-Vichy administration, although incorporation of increasing numbers of Vietnamese into the elite social organisation of colonial Indochina was new. The geographical relationship between Vietnamese and French in OBM during the 1940s shows differing attitudes towards the elite and working class. To refer back to Giddens (1984) and structuration theory, it was suggested in Chapter 4 that his comments on surveillance were of particular relevance for colonial societies. Giddens argued that surveillance within modern societies has grown and is part of the mechanism the elite use to maintain their positions. People are always aware when they are being watched and will change their behaviour to conform to what is expected by the observer, thereby ensuring that the major structures that define society are reproduced. In Indochina in the atmosphere of anxiety in which the French lived, surveillance was commonplace and the Sûreté was at the forefront of colonial repression (Marr, 1981). L. Sogny (OBM owner Lot 208) was the head of the Sûreté in Annam, and with the military presence, provided a constant reminder of this aspect of colonial control in OBM.

In OBM the use of surveillance can be recognised in the relationship between the Military camp and the Vietnamese village at the Col Girard. The Vietnamese village is segregated from the French residential areas and the military camp directly overlooks the village. Surveillance and segregation are equivalent parts of the relationship. In the oral history, Ông Hoàng Nhi Chắt and Bà Nguyễn Thi Thạo noted that most of the domestic staff in OBM villas came from Huế with the villa owners, so they were known to the family, loyal family servants. To get a job as a housekeeper at OBM, a villager from Cầu Hai needed to have a strong recommendation from the village leader. For the domestic staff working in the French villas there was a degree of familiarity and trust so that segregation of domestic living space seems to have been more important than surveillance in the relationship. Segregation here was maintained between villa residents and domestic staff and between domestic staff from neighbouring villas.

For the Vietnamese elite, even though their links seem to have been strongly related to family, their residences were generally widely distributed in the landscape. It seems possible that segregation acted under the Decoux régime to separate the living quarters of individual elite families to avoid the development of a Vietnamese enclave within the residential zones of OBM. This separation would also aid the surveillance of the Vietnamese elite families. The material fabric of OBM suggests that the intercultural and social group relationships between the French and the Vietnamese ranged from complete segregation and surveillance of the working class, to uncertain integration with an element of informal surveillance of the Vietnamese elite.

The policy of association introduced formally in the 1920s, largely in response to growing indigenous resistance, was based on the recognition rather than the denial of indigenous culture. Varenne saw the value in cooperation with the Vietnamese elite, but focused on those with a French education and recent qualifications. Through the 1930s and the liberalisation of policy under the Popular Front Government in France in 1936-38, it was still these local, indigenous elites, with strong affiliations with French culture, who were favoured by the French colonisers in Hué. It was from among this group that the first Vietnamese residents in Bạch Mã came, and who built residences on the northern ridge in 1938 and 1939, in relatively close proximity to each other.

It was during Decoux's administration and his implementation of Pétain's National Revolution in Indochina from 1940 that OBM flourished. The four main themes of the National Revolution were 'hierarchy, obedience, the family, and a return to the soil' and Jennings (2001:143, 149) also described Decoux's apparently reluctant acceptance of Pétain's insistence on racial segregation in the *Légion Française des Combattants et des Volontaires de la Révolution Nationale*. OBM reflects all these themes. Status is expressed through position in the landscape and in the material used in the construction of villas. Even more clear is the hierarchical organisation among Vietnamese social groups expressed spatially as well as in the nature and extent of segregation and surveillance associated with each group. Obedience is both enforced and instilled in people's behaviour by the military presence and the sense that they provide constant surveillance. 'The family' was always a feature of hill stations, even in India where Kanwar (1984:215) commented on the relatively high proportions of



women and children in the hill stations. Glerende (1939) highlighted the suitability of the climate in Bana and Bạch Mã for women and young children in particular. Most of the residential villas surveyed in OBM suggested small family homes with two to three bedrooms sharing a single bathroom. 'Return to the soil' was probably a significant stimulus for the development of OBM also, reflected in its public and private gardens, its wild and natural beauty, and the promotion of horticulture focusing on cool climate foods and flowers.

Jennings (2001:149) suggested that Decoux complied with Vichy's insistence on racial segregation in the Légion reluctantly. The presence of conservative Vietnamese notables in the Légion would have enhanced his efforts at collaboration through incorporation and promotion of more Vietnamese in the administration. In OBM it seems that the administration was not prepared to exclude the local Vietnamese elite, but they were spatially separated across OBM to avoid the possibility of the development of a Vietnamese enclave. Another element of the National Revolution that is clearly exhibited in OBM is the establishment of the Youth camp and ongoing support for the Boy Scouts' camp. These were central to the National Revolution's objective of regeneration of the country through the moral and physical education of its youth. It was this last group in particular who contributed to the failure of the French to reinstate their colonial dominance after WWII.

### ***8-5 Vietnamese attitudes to colonialism reflected in the material culture and oral history at Bạch Mã, 1930-1991***

The fourth objective of this study was to consider what the historical, oral and material evidence about Bạch Mã plateau, 1930-1991, suggests about the Vietnamese peoples' attitudes to the colonial occupation of Indochina. This section briefly reviews the evidence from Bạch Mã for the period of the French occupation, 1932-1945, then the events of 1945, during the First Indochina War, and finally, the postcolonial phase after 1954. For each phase, the evidence for collaboration (and/or cooperation) and resistance is outlined for both the Vietnamese working class and the elite.

Firstly, it is worthwhile to recall the 1930 letter from the secretary of the Resident Superior of Annam, Grandjean (quoted in Tai, 1992:248), when he said that the

French at that time had no friends in Indochina, neither among the peasantry and working class, nor among the mandarins (see Chapter 2-5-4). Vietnamese cooperation and collaboration was gained in an atmosphere of surveillance by the *Sûreté* and severe repression of dissent. The policy of association was intended to encourage a recognition and respect for indigenous cultural values, not only those of the glorious past studied by the Friends of Old Hué Society, but modern cultural traditions. Political liberalisation in the second half of the 1930s went only a small way towards satisfying the Vietnamese appetite for autonomy. But it had provided the opportunity for those with a French education and interest in French culture to find a prominent place in the new hill station development at Bạch Mã, in the cluster of Vietnamese villas on the northern ridge.

The development of OBM had a profound effect on the working class people and peasants in the communities close to OBM. For many it was their first opportunity to earn a cash income over and above their subsistence farming and fishing lifestyles. They had little direct contact with the French colonisers because there was always a local Vietnamese contractor who acted as mediator. Bà Bờ remembered an old folk song that praised the development and listed many of those villages that had benefited from it, from the Hải Vân Pass to Huế. But there was also resistance among the villagers expressed in their jokes, their avoidance of *corvée* labour, and in pilfering building materials when they worked as porters.

Among the Vietnamese elite during WWII the benefits of collaboration were limited to those with French education and qualifications. Collaboration gave them access to administrative positions and promotion, particularly as WWII progressed. They were accepted into the colonial social elite, at least in their presence in OBM. But also among these people, resistance to colonialism was evident in their maintenance of Vietnamese cultural traditions in architecture that in itself suggests their maintenance of Confucian traditions in respect for their ancestors which always occupied the central room in the traditional house. Vietnamese like Tạ Quang Bửu who fully participated in the Boy Scouts movement, a very European institution, was remembered for telling Vietnamese folk-hero tales while sitting around the campfire in Bạch Mã Scouts' camp. What these Vietnamese wanted was access to the technology and scientific knowledge of the French, because they recognised that

political power in the twentieth century depended on mastery of modern scientific knowledge and technology.

In March 1945 collaboration and cooperation with the French ceased. Working class people immediately began to procure and recycle cultural material items from the villas abandoned in OBM. The bourgeoisie, again admirably represented by Tạ Quang Bửu, began to organise among their peers for the inevitable end to the war and to Japanese occupation. None would openly support a French return. During 1945 the French were kept under armed Japanese protection as much as armed guard. Vietnamese administrators who assumed control of the bureaux resented the oversight of former French superiors. The educated bourgeoisie wanted the benefits offered by a globalising economy, but no-one wanted a return of French colonial domination.

In the period after the August 1945 Revolution and Hồ Chí Minh's declaration of independence on 2 September, most Vietnamese opposed the reintroduction of French colonialism. Many joined the Việt Minh to fight the French. Lê Hữu Con in his oral history described his experience of the French in 1953 when he was briefly conscripted into the colonial army. He said that at that time everybody hated the French. Many of the Vietnamese people who worked for the French during the First Indochina War were double-agents working also for the Việt Minh (Aldrich, 1996:286). Many of those who had trained in the Boy Scouts' camp and youth camp at Bạch Mã spent eight years from 1946 to 1954 fighting the French. Hồ Đắc Di, Hồ Đắc Diễm and Tạ Quang Bửu, formerly part of the elite in OBM, all joined the Hồ Chí Minh communist led government in Hanoi.

Finally, in the postcolonial period when South Vietnam was governed by the corrupt Ngô Đình Diệm government I have suggested that the Vietnamese people were involved in a process of actively dismantling the symbols of colonialism left by the French in Bạch Mã. It seems like an extension of their earlier passive resistance against the French. They removed and recycled the doors and windows and roofs to create their own symbol of colonial resistance, not only against the French, but from the injustice and inequity inherent in colonialism that some of their own countrymen were trying to revive.

## **Chapter 9 Conclusion**

### **9-1 Introduction**

This concluding chapter will first review the overall structure of the thesis to reiterate, very briefly, the thread of the narrative I have developed. The discussion will then return to the four objectives of the study to draw final conclusions and to consider what this research has contributed, its limitations and implications. Before concluding, the chapter comments on the contribution of this study to the broader discourse on colonialism to which the ‘Robinson and Gallagher controversy’ was a part, and which directed the focus of this study of OBM.

### **9-2 Structure of the thesis**

Chapter 1 introduced OBM and suggested that the hill stations of Asia were symbols of nineteenth and twentieth century European imperialism, and that because of its brief period of development OBM was a symbolic, material representation of the Vichy-French colonial moment in Vietnamese history. Four objectives for this research were presented which, in summary, were:

- to document the material fabric and oral history associated with Bạch Mã over a series of occupations, in order to enhance the documentary record;
- to place the development in its historical context and to consider the colonial role of Indochina’s hill stations, and the implications for future colonial occupation of Indochina;
- to consider issues of social status and relationships in Central Vietnamese colonialism expressed in the archaeology, and relate that to colonial policy; and,
- to consider what the archaeological evidence and the events in, or associated with, Bạch Mã suggested about the Vietnamese attitudes to the colonial era symbolised in OBM.

Chapter 2 outlined the international and local political developments that showed the French colonialists in Indochina coming under increasing pressure from both indigenous demands for increasing political autonomy, and from external threats from Japan that resulted in the Japanese occupation of Indochina in 1940. It was the Japanese who initially ended French colonial dominance in 1945, which the French

were unable to regain following WWII. Unfortunately, after WWII the independence struggle in Vietnam was appropriated by the great powers into their military frontline in the Cold War struggle between communism and capitalism and it was not until the mid 1980s and 1990s that Vietnam began to rebuild economically and environmentally after more than thirty years of war. The archaeological record of Bach Mã exhibits elements from several of these historical periods.

Chapter 3 introduced the broad issue of colonialism. Early studies of imperialism focused on the expansion of European trade, capital and prestige, as the driving force behind the development of nineteenth century European empires. Robinson and Gallagher, however, highlighted indigenous collaboration and resistance as crucial elements in colonialism that had been ignored in the studies of colonialism before the 1950s and 1960s. Central Vietnam was never a great economic contributor to the French colonial venture, and the development of an Indochinese economy based on international trade impacted the region only marginally, which limited the opportunity to examine the development of colonial capitalism in Central Vietnam. Central Vietnam, and OBM, did provide an opportunity to consider the issue of intercultural social relationships in a colonial context, and in particular, issues of collaboration and resistance among the indigenous population that Robinson and Gallagher had highlighted. Chapter 3 then examined how French colonial policy on intercultural social relations developed from one of assimilation in the nineteenth century, to association in the twentieth century, and to federalism under the Vichy colonial government in Indochina. Each policy was expressed in the French architecture and urban planning in the colonies, but none offered any meaningful political autonomy for the indigenous populations.

Chapter 4 then reviewed previous archaeological studies of colonialism with a focus on studies that considered how social status and intercultural relations are reflected in the material heritage, particularly how issues of collaboration and resistance are expressed in architecture and above ground archaeological remains. A series of studies of plantations in North America and the Caribbean were of particular interest because they showed how changes in the nature of the social relations of capitalism, with the abolition of slavery, were reflected in the spatial organisation, and the domestic architecture, of plantations. Chapter 4 also reviewed archaeological

taphonomic processes and highlighted how the emotional responses among people in a process of recovery from a disaster may influence the formation of the archaeological record. Chapter 5 outlined the research methods adopted for the field survey of Bạch Mã and the collection of the oral history. It noted also some of the constraints for this study that meant that only the surface material remains in Bạch Mã were accessible for this study.

Chapter 6 and 7 presented the history of the development of Bạch Mã from the limited documentary and oral history evidence available, followed by the description of the material character of Bạch Mã plateau. Chapter 6 highlighted how the development of OBM began quite slowly in the early 1930s, and that it was not until between 1938 and 1943 that the main part of the development occurred. This period is correlated with escalating indigenous dissent and the direct threats against Indochina by Japan, followed by the Japanese occupation in 1940-1945. The oral history presented in Chapter 6 highlighted the economic importance of the development of OBM to the local Vietnamese community and also indicated some aspects of indigenous resistance to colonialism expressed in the day-to-day activities of the working class. More than 130 villas, two hotels, a hospital and associated urban infrastructure including many kilometres of roads, paths and stairways, were established across as much as one hundred hectares of the Bạch Mã plateau before 1945. They were all built and serviced by Vietnamese people from the surrounding countryside and Huế. Chapter 7 described a sample of forty-nine structures showing the majority were built of stone and concrete with terracotta roofing tiles. Among the architectural ruins a series of Vietnamese ceramic bowls was identified as post-dating the main urban development and was related, with some support from oral history, with an extensive postcolonial process of recycling cultural material and the partial deconstruction of many French villas. A later phase of destruction was related to the Second Indochina War. Timber wall-frame and roofing timber, however, as well as windows and doors, were generally absent from the extensive war damage evident in the architectural structures. Their widespread absence from the rubble suggested that they had been removed before the houses were bombed, shelled and ‘shot-up’ during the late 1960s.

Chapter 8 integrated the archaeological, oral history and documentary evidence in a discussion that addressed each of the four objectives in turn. This chapter will now return to those objectives to present the final conclusions drawn from each, and to consider how the study of Bạch Mã contributes to our understanding of colonialism in Central Vietnam.

### **9-3 *Conclusions, contributions, limitations and implications of the study***

#### **9-3-1 Objective 1: To document the material fabric and oral histories associated with Bạch Mã over a series of occupations**

Chapter 8-2 discussed the archaeological and oral history evidence in relation to the development of the Bạch Mã plateau over three main occupation phases, the French (1932-1945), the Vietnamese (1957-1963), and the Second Indochina War, (1963-1973). The first four parts of the section 8-2-1 to 8-2-4, focused on the French ruins. What the French built at OBM did not resemble their earlier holiday accommodation. From 1938 on, the character of the hill station changed to reflect substance and longevity expressed in the stone and concrete of the architectural fabric. The changing character of OBM indicated that the hill station was attracting a significant amount of time and money, both institutional and private, that further suggested a significance beyond a holiday resort intended to maintain comfortable lifestyles. I suggested that the French planned to develop the hill station at Bạch Mã as an administrative centre modelled on, and incorporating, many of the features of Đà Lạt that was planned as the federal capital. OBM was also a site of innovation where the local French population were developing medical and industrial techniques that had not been employed elsewhere.

Sections 8-2-5 to 8-2-7 focused on the Vietnamese perspective of Bạch Mã. The oral history showed that development of OBM was extremely significant economically for the local village, but that resistance to colonialism expressed in disobedience and pilfering, was present among the working class in Central Vietnam during WWII. I also argued that the Vietnamese villagers of Central Vietnam developed another form of resistance in the postcolonial era. By dismantling the material symbol of

colonialism, not with fire or gunpowder, but by re-using moveable materials and opening the French villas to the elements, they ensured the rapid deterioration of the fabric of the buildings, thereby retaining the symbolism of an oppressive colonial regime, but also of the enduring resistance that defeated it.

### **Contribution**

The contribution of this part of the study is that it has focused on the archaeological interpretation and local oral history, of a type of feature that symbolises the colonial occupation, but has not previously been used in Vietnam to study issues of French colonialism in Indochina. It showed that the archaeological concepts developed in colonial sites elsewhere, are applicable in a Southeast Asian context. It showed how the different social groups were represented in the material heritage of French colonialism in Vietnam. It also suggested that their spatial organisation suggested that the use of surveillance and segregation within the French colonial system echoed the social organisation under slavery in North America and the Caribbean in the nineteenth century. The contribution of the study is that it placed the Vietnamese at the centre of a predominantly French construction, and highlighted the French dependence on Vietnamese participation in the construction and maintenance of their colonial positions. In this study of a colonial site that clearly expressed French dominance, the intention to focus on the Vietnamese position was useful in identifying a potential form of resistance among the working class and peasantry, not only to European colonialism, but to the injustice and inequity that some postcolonial indigenous elites wished to reproduce for their own benefit. Already by the end of the 1950s, the Vietnamese people were expressing their attitudes through the deconstruction of OBM that was so clearly a symbolic representation of the colonial system of the French.

### **Limitations**

This part of the study highlighted four limitations. Firstly, the archaeological study was constrained by being limited to surface objects only. A more detailed examination of cross-cultural relations could have been gained by comparing deposits in buried rubbish pits. This might have revealed a greater degree of acculturation in both French and Vietnamese material culture. The surface evidence suggested little incorporation of Vietnamese cultural traits in French sites. Considering the long-term



residence in Central Vietnam of many of the lot owners in OBM, I expected to find a greater representation of indigenous heritage. This may have been more visible in smaller items which may now be preserved in rubbish pits or were recycled into the broader community rather than in the architecture, which as Wright (1997) noted, was a significant feature for the expression of French colonial policy. Furthermore, as Van Buren's (1999) study in South America suggested, as settlements became more permanent, colonial structures increasingly incorporated European cultural elements. The political environment, in which the French emphasis was on distinguishing French culture from the Japanese, must be a factor in the architectural character of OBM. Among the Vietnamese elite there appeared to be some ambivalence reflected in their reluctance to incorporate French spatial concepts in their architecture within a façade largely equivalent to the neighbouring French villas. They participated in the symbolic expression of OBM while still maintaining traditional cultural elements in their architecture that reflected their continuing nationalist feelings. While maintaining their links with traditional material culture, the Vietnamese elite maintained their connections with the wider Vietnamese community. The participation of Vietnamese young men in the Boy Scouts indicated their hunger for European knowledge and skills, but this also was framed within Vietnamese cultural traditions that honoured national independence, and developed the skills to reclaim it.

The second limitation of the study is that OBM was developed over such a short period of time, thereby reflecting only one aspect of the broader political environment, in this case marked by increasing threats toward French control under the pro-Vichy administration. In Chapter 1 it was argued that that OBM symbolised the Vichy moment of Jean Decoux's administration in Indochinese history. As the threats against the French increased, the architecture in OBM became more substantial, providing perhaps a sense of security in a hostile environment, both natural and social, but it also expressed the majestic character of colonialism that Decoux so relished. It does not, however, provide a material record of changing French policy over a series of administrations as does Orser's study of plantations in North America.

The third limitation of the study is that the archaeological analysis of the postcolonial period depends to a large degree on an assemblage of Central Vietnamese ceramics

from the colonial period that have attracted very little specialist interest and study, and this has limited the nature of inferences that can be drawn from them. The fourth limitation is that the oral history study did not include French sources that could have clarified many issues relating to the interpretation of the time and place of OBM. This was a conscious choice because it was anticipated that the incorporation of French documentary (archival) and oral history evidence would have resulted in a study dominated by French colonial issues. The French have inevitably occupied a large part of the present study anyway, but have not dominated the study to the exclusion of the place of the local people and what the material evidence suggests about social relationships.

### **Implications**

The first three limitations outlined above lead to two clear implications in the potential for further archaeological research. Firstly, the potential for additional research in Bạch Mã itself incorporating targeted excavation of domestic rubbish pits, would be enhanced by a comparative study with similar sites in Indochina, for example at the hill station sites of Tam Đảo and Ba Vi in the north, and Bokor in Cambodia. In southern Vietnam, a suitable comparison might be found in plantation sites in which similar social hierarchies might be expected, although with different levels of representation of social groups, and perhaps lacking the Vietnamese elite. Questions that such a comparative study might address include whether the nature of intercultural social relations were repeated across the country, or if the conservative, mandarin-dominated environment of the imperial capital, Huế, influenced the hierarchical spatial organisation of social relations in a particular way.

Second, the domestic ceramics of Central Vietnam from the colonial era have still to attract specialist study. Based on very limited evidence, I expect that a study of the history of the ceramic craft in the vicinity of Bình Định Province, not far from the Go Sanh kilns that have been dated to no later than the fifteenth century (R. M. Brown, 2000:39) could provide an understanding of the development of craft villages in Vietnam over several centuries.

### **9-3-2 Objective 2 To place the development in its historical context and to consider the colonial role of Indochina's hill stations, and the implications for future colonial occupation of Indochina**

#### **Conclusion and contribution**

In placing the development of OBM in its historical context, Chapter 8-3 argued that OBM and the other hill stations in Indochina were developed as a response to growing threats against the French from indigenous independence movements within Indochina and from the occupying Japanese military. Hill stations offered a refuge from the real world that confronted the colonialists on the plains and in the cities. The villas of OBM were built with a sense of permanence that suggested a plan to establish a series of administrative centres from which control of the country could be directed from relative security and comfort. But to understand why so many people and institutions should invest so heavily, given the uncertainty of the times and the identified function of hill stations as holiday resorts, needs to be addressed through the French and Vietnamese archives.

In the light of Delle's observation that, during times of crisis and restructuring, elites increase their attempts to reorganise the spatial environment, and consequently the social environment, in order to maintain their own social position, the material evidence of OBM suggests that hill stations had a significant role in this process. During the early 1940s the French clearly believed their colonial rule in Indochina would continue after the war, but perhaps they recognised that the future must involve greater autonomy for the Vietnamese. In the hill stations as administrative centres, the French could maintain their political dominance through the control of an element of the Vietnamese elite whose mediating role in the colonial venture would also distance them from the majority of the population. The demonstrated incorporation of Vietnamese in the colonial social elite, indicated by their participation in OBM, would ensure that Vietnamese collaborators were distanced from the nationalist elements in the community. The working class Vietnamese were to remain strictly segregated, but through the training and education of young people, they hoped to improve the general lot of the population.

One point the research into the historical development of OBM failed to identify was any coordination of the working class resistance to the French. The communists were

not mentioned in the oral history. Cầu Hai Village and Phú Lộc District, however, did figure quite prominently in the documented history of the provincial Communist Party. Key figures, for example, Lâm Mộng Quang, a prominent organiser in Huế for the Việt Minh in 1945, and later in 1947 a member of the executive board of the party's provincial committee, had been based at Cầu Hai railway station in the early 1930s (Kết, 1999). Cầu Hai was also the site of a provincial party congress in May 1945 at which the representatives developed a strategy for a general insurrection when the Japanese, inevitably lost the war. Following the surrender of the Japanese on 15 August 1945, the insurrection was launched in Phú Lộc and spread across the province and into Huế (Đỗ, Ngô, & Nguyễn, 2005). Clearly, OBM was the focus of propagandists, such as the influence that Tạ Quang Bửu and Hoàng Đạo Thúy had within the Boy Scouts. This does not seem to have extended into the wider population, as represented by the working-class in OBM. Of course it is important to acknowledge that the working class in OBM was not an organised proletariat like those in the factories of Vinh and Hải Phòng, or the plantations of Cochinchina. In general, they were farmers and fishers from a relatively remote part of the province, who perhaps had little exposure to politics. A more focused study in Vietnam would illuminate this issue.

### **Limitations and implications**

The limitations to this interpretation follow from the lack of a French oral history mentioned under Objective 1. Clearly, the absence of any significant interpretation of French archival documents makes any discussion of French intentions pure speculation. The question as to why the French would invest so much in a holiday resort, however, at a time of such constraint and uncertainty, deserves to be addressed. Clearly, much more than a holiday resort was intended. Difficulty in gaining access to archival documents for Huế and Central Vietnam may not be repeated for the northern region, or for Cambodia. Targeted research in the archives of Vietnam and France into the issues underlying the rapid development of a series of hill stations is likely to increase our understanding of long-term French perspectives for their colonial position that may not be clearly discussed in other forums, considering the Japanese presence throughout the war.

### **9-3-3 Objective 3 To consider issues of social status and relationships in Central Vietnamese colonialism expressed in the archaeology, and relate that to colonial policy**

#### **Conclusion and contribution.**

Chapter 8-4 argued that the archaeological evidence of OBM indicated a widespread French perception of clear distinctions between colonial social groups. Firstly, the French dominated the elite social group, but this group included a small coterie from among the Vietnamese nobility. The majority of the Vietnamese elite, particularly those without a thorough understanding of the French language and culture, were excluded from the elite, colonial social-group. They were, however, increasingly involved in the lower levels of the colonial administration and were accepted increasingly in supportive roles in the colonial venture. The working class was divided into two groups. Those involved in the day-to-day maintenance of the domestic comforts of the colonialists were accommodated close to, but quite separate from the family. The wider working class, although essential for the maintenance of the colonialists, were generally excluded from the material benefits associated with the colonial venture.

The intercultural social relations between the French and the different Vietnamese social groups, ranged from complete segregation and surveillance of the working class, to integration of the Vietnamese elite into the urban development of OBM, but segregation, or at least separation, within that social group across the landscape. The existence of segregation based on social hierarchy was institutionalised and to be expected. The contribution of this study is that it described the material expression of segregation and suggested that it existed differentially across all social groups in Indochina. It seems possible to see a shift towards strengthening internal segregation within the Vietnamese elite during WWII, while at the same time increasing their integration into the administrative hierarchy. This seems to reflect the uncertainty that Governor-General Decoux experienced regarding the ethnic exclusion of the Vietnamese elite from the Légion (Jennings, 2001:149). His administration in Hué seems to have been unwilling to exclude the Vietnamese elite from OBM entirely, so that after the early occupation of the northern ridge where four Vietnamese villas are clustered, later Vietnamese residents were scattered across the urban development. The degree of segregation and surveillance of the working class, however, indicated that the administration considered that it was this group that, potentially organised by

communist cadres, contributed the greatest threat. In fact, it was the educated Vietnamese bourgeoisie, represented by Tạ Quang Bửu and the Boy Scouts who had trained in Bạch Mã, that were at the forefront of establishing an independent administration following the overthrow of the French and the surrender of the Japanese in Huế. The French colonialists were blinded by their own elitism and paranoia to the real world around them.

### **Limitations and implications**

The analysis of social relationships is limited by the lack of archaeological data relating to the working class living area in OBM, the Vietnamese village at Col Girard, because of storm damage suffered by the forest in that area in 2006. Living conditions for the working class have been inferred from possible living sites in the Vietnamese market at Col Girard, and later phase occupation sites at the southwest farming zone, and in the Valley site in the gully below the Hôtel Bany, which suggested relatively ephemeral structures and basic living conditions. What this study showed is that it is possible to identify living areas and to distinguish between social groups archaeologically. Archaeological assessments of other colonial sites in former French Indochina, for example, plantation sites, should be readily able to distinguish between living areas of different social groups. This highlights a potential new source of study in Vietnamese cultural evolution.

### **9-3-4 Objective 4 To consider what the archaeological evidence and the events in or associated with Bạch Mã suggested about the Vietnamese response to the colonial era symbolised in OBM**

#### **Conclusion and contribution**

Chapter 8-5 described evidence of both collaboration and resistance during the French occupation of Bạch Mã Mountain, among both the Vietnamese working class and the educated bourgeoisie and elite. The resistance was subtle, but reflected the Vietnamese awareness of their long tradition of struggle against foreign domination and oppression. Most Vietnamese people wanted the benefits offered by modern technology and scientific knowledge, but they wanted meaningful recognition and respect from the French at the same time. With the overthrow of the French by the Japanese in March 1945, cooperation and collaboration ceased, and the French were unable to again pacify the country, even after eight years of war when their military force was backed by anti-communist US funding. There is nothing new about

recognising Vietnamese dissent to French colonial rule. What this study has done is to identify how some of this dissent was expressed in the material culture of the Vietnamese elite. More significantly, the study has suggested that it was not only the French that the working-class Vietnamese resented, but it was the inequality and injustice that had become an inherent part of colonial occupation. The contribution of this part of the study is the recognition of possibly another form of colonial resistance by the Vietnamese working class, the symbolic deconstruction of the French symbol of colonialism represented in OBM. This time the resistance was not against the French because it occurred shortly after the French army had finally withdrawn from southern Indochina. What I originally identified as a taphonomic process was also, I suggested, an emotional reaction to ongoing injustices and inequities implemented by the postcolonial government of South Vietnam.

### **Limitations and implications**

The association of the deconstruction of buildings, recycling or even looting, with resistance to social injustice is not new, but may not have been identified in a setting such as Bach Mã. Dawdy's (2006) suggestion that social reconstruction after a disaster involves emotional responses seemed perfectly appropriate for the environment of OBM, where after an eight year war of independence, the landless poor were being transplanted to highland environments to which they had no traditional attachment, by a corrupt government official who was literally trying to reconstruct the symbols of his colonial predecessors. Such an association has not been made before in relation to modern colonial Vietnam. The implication, or perhaps challenge, must be to identify similar processes in other sites.

### **9-4 *Bach Mã and the Robinson and Gallagher controversy***

The 'Robinson and Gallagher controversy' is a term used by Louis (1976) and others to refer to the debate about theories of imperialism that followed Robinson and Gallagher's thesis that studies of imperialism must take into account the role of indigenous politics, rather than viewing it as a purely European construct (Gallagher & Robinson, 1953; Robinson, 1972; Robinson, Gallagher, & with Denny, 1961). They argued that indigenous collaboration and resistance were central to understanding, not only the colonial expansion of Europe in the nineteenth century, but also to the decline of colonialism in the twentieth century. Robinson and

Gallagher challenged the dominant theories of imperialism that had focused on the economic and strategic perspectives of Europe, by arguing that the historical evidence demanded recognition that indigenous issues played at least as significant a role as the economic and strategic expansive forces in Europe.

In reflecting on the aspects of colonialism represented in OBM two things were clear. First, in the context of WWII French Indochina was cut off from the *metropole*, so that European economic expansion was not an issue in explaining the growth of OBM. Furthermore, during the development of OBM, a large proportion of economic production was consumed by WWII, evidenced by the death by starvation in 1944-45 of up to two million people in Tonkin and northern Annam. Secondly, OBM was so distinctly a colonial construct, located in a distinctly Vietnamese environment, the most immediate issue was to identify where the Vietnamese people were in this construction: how they were represented in the material fabric of OBM.

Robinson's (1972) ideas of a collaborating elite and his description of the character of collaboration in an Asian colonial context was clearly reflected in the history of French Indochina, so that issues of collaboration and resistance became an obvious perspective with which to approach an analysis of OBM. The purpose was not to use OBM as a case study for the Robinson and Gallagher controversy, but to use the concepts of collaboration and resistance outlined by Robinson and Gallagher to gain some understanding of the Vietnamese perspective of the type of colonialism represented in OBM. The objective was to find where the Vietnamese were in this colonial construction, what they were doing and what they thought about it. After all, OBM occupies a far more significant place in Central Vietnam's cultural heritage than it does in French colonial heritage.

Robinson (1972:118) noted that his and Gallagher's ideas about colonial collaboration and resistance were also relevant for understanding the end of colonialism. In Vietnam in March 1945, when the French were removed and OBM was abandoned, many of the elite Vietnamese repositioned their collaboration with indigenous nationalist forces. In the context of the end of WWII, widespread famine as a consequence of French-Japanese collaboration, and the assumption of control of the administration by Hồ Chí Minh, the French had lost all relevance to the Vietnamese.



During the eight years they spent trying to fight their way back in, anti-colonial, anti-French feelings among the Vietnamese grew. The French no longer had the credibility to offer the advantages of modern western knowledge. That was now offered by the US in the south and the USSR in the north, so that in the absence of indigenous collaboration the French finally withdrew completely.

The contribution of this study of OBM to the study of imperialism is that it has provided a perspective of the material expression of collaboration and resistance in a Vietnamese context. The techniques applied in Bạch Mã are suitable to apply to other sites in the former French Indochina, and of course, elsewhere in Asia. Hill stations are not obviously driven by a capitalist need to open new markets or exploit resources. They do offer examples of conspicuous colonial behaviour in which to examine aspects of intercultural social relationships not recorded elsewhere.

### **9-5 Conclusion**

The historical archaeology of OBM has provided an additional avenue with which to approach issues of colonialism. It has proved a useful approach to achieve the overall objective of this study, which was to focus on the indigenous perspective, to tell the story of the Vietnamese in OBM. It has been successful in as much as it identified the different social groups involved, where they were in OBM, and a little of what they were doing, and the significance of OBM in their lives. It has raised some issues about Vietnamese postcolonial attitudes to the symbols of colonialism. It has raised questions about the French purpose there, by suggesting that OBM and the hill stations of Indochina were much more than holiday resorts. The archaeology is limited in what it can say about reasons, but it is an excellent tool for studying symbols.

Stoler (2008) recently reflected on colonial architectural ruins, including them in a category of 'imperial formations', and their use in colonial studies in a postcolonial world. She suggested that such imperial formations can be seen not only in the colonial buildings falling into disrepair or being reclaimed by the tropical jungles of former colonies, but also in the engineered landscapes of plantations, the defoliated forests of Indochina and the associated health and welfare crises of the people who live within those ruins of imperialism. She asked if the 2005 riots in Paris by

marginalised émigrés cannot be seen as part of those imperial formations. But by focusing on the ‘materiality of debris, we seek to stay in the “logic of the concrete”’ (Stoler, 2008:203). Ruins can be seen as enchanted reflections of a colonial era, ‘quintessential images’ of what has vanished and decayed, obsolete. But colonial studies need to make connections, ‘to recognise that these are unfinished histories, not of victimized pasts but consequential histories that open to differential futures’ (Stoler, 2008:195).

Stoler (2008:196-7, 211) quoted Derek Walcott’s 1992 Nobel prize acceptance lecture: ‘history rises over ruins, not landscapes’. ‘Ruins hold histories’, but look at how the ruins are being used today, portrayed variously as ‘innocuous leftovers, stubbornly inhabited to make a point, or requisitioned for a newly refurbished commodity life for tourist consumption’. Imperial ruins should be seen not as melancholic remnants of a failed past regime, but as a critical vantage point to examine the politics of the present. She concluded by arguing that we need to rethink what constitutes an effective history of the present ‘to refocus our historical lens on what is residual and tenacious, what is dominant but hard to see, and not least what is emergent in today’s imperial formations’. Imperial ruins provide a tangible link between the past and the present and we need to become aware of their influence in the present.

Chapter 1 introduced OBM as a symbol of the Vichy moment in Vietnam’s history. A review of French policy found the major themes reflected in the planning and fabric of OBM. I have showed that the ruins of OBM are a tangible reflection of the French colonial system in Annam during WWII. Similar to the hill stations of India, OBM and the hill stations of Indochina served a particular role in the colonial imagination. In the words of Edward Said (1979:79), these ‘imaginative geographies ... help the [coloniser’s] mind intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close and what is far away’, between the colonisers refuge and the political uncertainty and turmoil of the cities and plains.

In looking beyond the French abandonment of OBM I hinted at something else which Stoler recognised. Colonial ruins are not just tangible links with a troubled past, but are part of unfinished histories and provide a critical vantage point to examine the

politics of the present. That is what I suggested the Vietnamese people were doing in the late 1950s when they helped form the archaeological record as we see it today. The symbol they left is not only one of the colonial might of the French Empire, but also of the spirit of independence within the Vietnamese people. The cultural value of OBM to Vietnam in the twenty-first century is in the ruins rather than any reconstructed past, and what they reflect of the political economy of Central Vietnam in the twenty-first century.

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