

# Historical – Cultural Process of Prehistoric Residents in the Mountainous Area of Nghe An Province

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**Abstract:** The mountainous area of Nghe An province is a place which contains numerous prehistoric cave sites, attesting to an early human occupation around 60,000 years ago. The mountainous area of Nghe An is also the place where a number of late Paleolithic and early Neolithic sites came into being, contributing to the formation of the Da But, Quynh Van and Bau Tro cultures. In the post-Hoabinhian period, the ancient people of the mountains of Nghe An still maintained the Hoabinhian traditions such as living in caves, doing hunting - gathering, particularly collecting molluscan species. In the early Bronze Age, some upland groups of residents expanded their occupation to the river terrace and practiced the sedentary agricultural activities, contributing to the process of exchange, integration and acculturation in the Northern Central region of Vietnam.

**Keywords:** Prehistoric culture, historical process, Nghe An.

## 1. Introduction

Nghe An is a province located in Vietnam's Northern Central region, which covers a largest area among the country's provinces (16,507.3 km<sup>2</sup>) and is full of well-known prehistoric cultural hallmarks. In 2015, the Institute of Archaeology discovered 21 new caves and re-examined more than 20 other sites [10]. These are an important source of historical materials that help look into the historical – cultural

process of the local residential communities on this land in the prehistoric period from the Paleolithic through the Neolithic to the Bronze Age.

## 2. The Paleolithic

The late Paleolithic of the upland of Nghe An is characterised by two phases: the formative phase of the early modern human beings and the phase of the late modern ones.

### 2.1. *The formative phase of the early modern people*

This phase is best represented with Tham Om cave site, in Thuan Chau commune, Quy Chau district. The site was first discovered in 1973, then test-excavated in 1975 and excavated in 1977. The site yielded more than 30 fossil animal species (most characterised by Pongo, bamboo bear and stegodon) dated back to the Pleistocene age, along with *Homo sapiens* fossils and lithic tools.

Among the *Homo* teeth unearthed in Tham Om, 5 are found to be close to those of *Homo sapiens*, simultaneously bearing the traits of *Homo erectus* of the earlier times such as low tooth walls, convex inner walls and pointed canine. At the onset, Tham Om sediments were thought to have a date of 140,000–250,000 BP because there existed the giant gibbon species among the fossils [5, pp.24-26]. Nonetheless, after the teeth were re-examined, they turned out to be those of *Pongo* sp., then Tham Om age was corrected at around 60,000 BP. Likewise, the stone tools here were first thought to fall into the Lower Paleolithic, but now they have been classified into the Upper Paleolithic tantamount to the industry of Lang Vac (Nghe An) and the lower layer of Con Moong cave (Thanh Hoa). The fauna of Tham Om cave were found similar to those of Hum cave (Yen Bai), Lang Trang cave (Thanh Hoa), Padang cave on Sumatra island and Punung cave on Java island (Indonesia). Two caves in Indonesia shared the same absolute date of 80,000 BP by applying the method of Aspartic Acid Racemisation (AAR) [18, pp.101-109]. This is a reason why Tham

Om age was expected to be between 60,000 BP and 70,000 BP.

As we have known, not many human fossils and very few sites have been absolutely dated in South Asia and Southeast Asia. Only one modern human skull aged at 40,000 BP has so far been known in Niah 1 cave, Sarawak, Malaysia. The modern human remains known youngest in South Asia were discovered in Fa Hein (Sri Lanka) dated at 36,000 BP, whereas the earliest one in island Southeast Asia was the human fossil found in Callao cave, Luzon island (the Philippines) aged at circa 67,000 BP [21, pp.123-132].

In 2015, an excavation at Tam Pa Ling cave, Houaphan province (Laos) revealed a human skull (labelled TPL1) and a lower jaw (labelled TPL2) on the mountain range running across the Vietnam – Laos border. The human skull TPL1 and the lower jaw TPL2 were observed in the same stratigraphical unit dated from 63,000 BP to 44,000 BP [22, pp.1-17]. However, no labouring tools were found. The finding of early modern human remains in Tham Om and Tam Pa Ling (Laos) indicated that the locality attested to the formative process of the earliest modern human in Southeast Asia.

### 2.2. *The phase of late modern human beings (40,000 BP – 11,000 BP)*

This phase in the mountainous area of Nghe An is represented by Tham Om cave (upper layer), Tham Chang, Bua cave, Bong cave, Co Ngun cave (Quy Chau), Ong Trang cave (Con Cuong), Bo 1 rockshelter and Bo 3 rockshelter (Anh Son) together with some sites located on the hill and river terrace in Nghia Dan district.

In 2015, the upper layer of Tham Om cave yielded 16 simply flaked pebble tools including such typologies as choppers, scrapers, points, amorphous tools and flake tools. Tham Chang cave produced 9 tools made on pebbles, split pebbles or flakes, along with stream and freshwater tail-cut snail shells. Ong Trang cave presented 2 chopper-like pebble tools. Bo 3 rockshelter exhibited 7 lithic tools with typologies of end choppers, side choppers, points, pestles and flaked pebble tools. These tools look similar to those in the late Paleolithic period of Lang Vac site (Nghe An) and those in layers 4 and 5 of Con Moong cave (Thanh Hoa) which, as defined by the OSL (Optically Stimulated Luminescence), date back from 40,000 BP to 32,000 BP.

In the deposits of some cave walls such as Bua cave, Bong cave, Co Ngun cave (Quy Chau) and Bo 1 rockshelter (Anh Son) are still preserved the animal fossils (like those of monkeys, cervids, pigs, elephants, rhinos, buffaloes, cows and so on) and molluscan shells like land snails and stream snails and occasionally stone tools. These are often encountered in the late Paleolithic industries of Vietnam. Similarly, in the mid-land of Nghe An, some late Paleolithic sites like Lang Vac, Xom Dinh, Con Kho, Mo Van and Nghia Quang are located on the hilly region of Nghia Dan district. The local tools are mainly made on pebble, quartz and quartzite found in the late Pleistocene deposit with such typologies as pointed tools, end choppers, side choppers, two-edge tools, round-shaped tools and quarter-pebble tools representative of the Son Vi culture.

The late Paleolithic residents on the highlands of Nghe An lived not only in the open air, but also in limestone caves, practicing hunting – gathering in the karst valleys and riverside hills. Some animal species found in caves such as monkeys, cervids, pigs, elephants and rhinos might have been the preys caught by ancient people. These people were also the first ones who collected various freshwater molluscan species for foods. At work, they used the simply flaked pebble tools, split-pebble tools and flakes with sharp edges as knives to cut games. They lived in small groups in limestone areas of such communes as Chau Thuan, Chau Tien and Chau Binh (Quy Chau), Hoa Son (Anh Son), Chi Phuong (Con Cuong) or the riverside hills of Nghia Dan district. Thanks to working and living together, the social and community relations were strengthened. People at that time lived closely together, did hunting, gathering and fighting against wild beasts for their survival and development. The common traits between pebble tool collections in the mountains of Nghe An and those in the mountains of Thanh Hoa, Ninh Binh, Quang Binh and Quang Tri, suggest a cultural relationship across Vietnam's Northern Central region.

### **3. The phase of the early Neolithic**

The phase of the early Neolithic in the uplands of Nghe An is characterised by flaked stone tools typical of the Hoabinhian industry dated from 11,000 BP to 5,000 BP. Until today, there are 18 early Neolithic sites identified in the mountains of Nghe An, the most typical caves of which include

Tham Hoi, Khe Dau, Co Ngun, Bua, Bac Quang caves, T3 rockshelters, Pha Phang 1, Pha Phang 2, Pha Phang 3, Noong Mu 1, Noong Mu 2, Hoong Nang, Cua Luy, Dong Truong, Van Dong, Chua caves, and Bo 1 and Bo 2 rockshelters. Among them, three sites have been excavated, namely Tham Hoi (Con Cuong), Dong Truong (Anh Son) and Chua cave (Tan Ky). Dong Truong cave displayed a 1.3m-thick cultural deposit comprising 2 layers, with the upper containing Bronze Age artefacts and the lower, 60-70cm in thickness, yielding the Hoabinhian-like tools [12, pp.64-66]. The latter exposed more than 200 lithic tools including disc-shaped scrapers, oval-shaped axes, points, end choppers, side choppers, multi-edge tool, quarter-pebble tools, flake tools, pestles, saddle querns and pebble with circular depressions.

Also regarding the period of the early Neolithic, there were two additional excavations at Tham Hoi cave (Con Cuong) [3, pp.60-63] and Chua cave (Tan Ky) [8, pp.71-72]. The cultural deposits of these two caves possess a high density of land snail shells more than 1.6m deep, divided into two layers: the lower belonging to the Hoabinhian, the upper belonging to the late Neolithic, with no sterile layer observed between them. In the lower layers of Tham Hoi cave and Chua cave, chopping tools, scrapers, axe-shaped tools, disc-shaped tools, pestles, points, knives and flake tools were unearthed. Unlike other typical Hoabinhian sites in Vietnam, short axes and edge-ground axes were hardly seen here.

The early Neolithic cultural phase in the mountains of Nghe An were determined by applying the radiocarbon dating method to samples collected at Tham Hoi site which

produced the results of  $10,125 \pm 175$  BP (calculated from the year 1950),  $10,875 \pm 175$  BP,  $10,255 \pm 150$  BP,  $10,815 \pm 150$  BP and  $10,550 \pm 120$  BP; as well as samples from Chua cave site that resulted in dates of  $9,075 \pm 120$  BP,  $9,575 \pm 120$  BP and  $9,175 \pm 120$  BP.

With respect to the early Neolithic human remains, according to Nguyen Lan Cuong, the human remains in the burials No. 2 and No. 3 at Tham Hoi cave were aged from 35 to 45. The deceased at the burial No. 2 at Chua cave site pertained to the Australo-negroid, while the one at the burial No. 1 of Tham Hoi cave was a mix between Australo-negroid and Mongoloid [1, pp.79-89]. Ten burials in the early Neolithic were found made directly into the ground. The human remains there were badly broken and not complete; only a single skull found in one burial (burial No. 8), and one skull observed in the centre of a pile of fragmented bones (burial No. 3). Nevertheless, it was possible to identify 3 different positions, namely lying on one's side with the flexed position (burial No. 1), the flexed position with folded four limbs (burials No. 5, 7 and 10) and the squat position with arms clasping one's knees (burials No. 6 and No. 9). These are all valuable records on the custom of burying the Hoabinhian deceased in Nghe An. Among 13 individuals, 4 were children and 8 were adults [2, pp.60-63].

The faunal remains of Chua cave and Tham Hoi showed wild animals, no sign of breeding and cultivation. Of which, cervid species made up a high percentage (46%), wild cattle (21%), a lower percentage with pigs and monkeys. These two caves also exposed 13 molluscan species belonging to

two groups of snails and clams. They were land and freshwater species, usually seen in the North of the country and today served as foods by people.

The early Neolithic sites in the mountains of Nghe An is as an integral part of the Neolithic of Vietnam's Northern Central region. The site representing Northern Nghe An is Dieu rockshelter (Thanh Hoa) which was excavated in 1986 and 1998. The site displayed a more than 4m-thick stratigraphy, including 6 stratigraphical units from the lowest upwards: the layers 4, 5 and 6 falling into the Paleolithic and the layers 1, 2 and 3 belonging to the Neolithic. The C14 dates analysed from Dieu rockshelter are as follows: layer 5: 25,000 BP – 20,000 BP, layer 4: 20,000 BP – 12,000 BP, and layers 3 and 2: 12,000 BP – 9,000 BP. The lithic assemblage of Dieu rockshelter can be described as a flaked pebble industry, not fully reflecting the Sonvian and Hoabinhian cultures, but the Dieu industry [4, pp.5-14].

From Nghe An southwards, there are a few early Neolithic sites such as Yen Lac, Kim Bang, Xom Tham, Xom Thon and Duc Thi (Quang Binh) which were discovered by M.Colani in 1930 [14, pp.299-422]. The sites are often small sized, low and located near rivers and streams. Like Nghe An, their cultural deposits are composed of the freshwater snail shells, Palunine species, rare Antimelania species. Stone tools were primarily made on the local source of pebble and schists, which were lightly chipped with prominent typologies of almond-shaped axes, short axes, disc-shaped scrapers, edge-ground axes and two-parallel-groove schists often encountered in

the Hoabinhian and Bacsonian cultures [9, pp.1-13].

Recent studies of magnetic susceptibility in some caves in Thanh Hoa, Ninh Binh and Hoa Binh indicated that the climate of this region was characterised by the alternate cycles of hot humid, dry cold and cool patterns from 12,000 BP to 7,000 BP. During the time, there was a really cold period of time occurring between 11,400 BP and 8,000 BP and simultaneously a precipitation that increased by multiple times compared to the previous periods [6], which can be considered the reasons why the early Neolithic people chose to inhabit in caves, and gathered mollusc species and caught aquatic products from rivers and lakes [20, pp.64-73].

In spite of living relatively isolated in the limestone valleys of the mountains of Nghe An, local residents still maintained their linkage to one another and to the contemporaries in the Northern Central region. For this reason, the consistency in the cultural behaviour towards the dead was still observed among these groups of people such as burying the deceased on site, placing them in a flexed position, graves being surrounded by rocks, accompanied with tools as gravegoods and dusted with red ochre.

The early Neolithic people in the mountains of Nghe An had an association, to some extent, with those in the same period in Laos, Thailand and Cambodia. Laos, situated in the west of Nghe An, has made a number of archaeological discoveries and studies in terms of caves since long ago, and started in 2004 with *The archaeological project in the middle stream of Mekong river* led by Joyce White. The

project discovered tens of cave and rockshelter sites, noticeably the excavations at Tham Mae cave, Phou Phaa Khao rockshelter and Tham Vang Ta Leow cave that all belonged to the typical Hoabinhian [19, pp.25-27]. In the assemblage of Tham Mae cave, iron-shaped tools resembling those at Sai York (Thailand) and Dieu rockshelter (Thanh Hoa) were found. At Mouxeu Ngeubhinh rockshelter (Luang Nam Tha province), its lower layer produced the OSL dates ranging from 56,000 BP to  $45,000 \pm 200$  BP with retouched chert flake tools representative of the pre-Hoabinhian phase; in the later-dated layers, the typical Hoabinhian tools like sumatraliths and oval-shaped axes were found [23, pp.529-537]. In the cave of Tham Vang Ta Leow (Luang Prabang province), the Hoabinhian lithic industry was dated at  $9,770 \pm 50$  BP [24, p.319]. The above data pointed out that in the early Neolithic the limestone upland of Thanh Hoa – Nghe An was closely connected with Laos and contained the essential characteristics of the Hoabinhian in mainland Southeast Asia.

In Thailand, some early Neolithic Hoabinhian-like sites such as Sai York, Ongbah, Spirit cave, Banyan Valley cave, Cliffs cave, Pha Chang rockshelter, Ment, Peteh Kuha, Heap and Khao Talu and Moh Khiew caves have been excavated. In the late 1990s, Shoocongdej conducted excavations at some caves like Lang Kamnan and Tham Lod rockshelter in Mae Hong Son province.

Among the above-mentioned sites, Sai York is noteworthy with 3 cultural layers: the lowest is over 4m thick (bearing a number of simply flaked tools like side

choppers, end choppers, pointed tools and hand-hoe-shaped tools which were thought to be close to the late phase of the Soan, western Punjab and northern India), the middle pertaining to the Hoabinhian, and the uppermost falling into the late Neolithic [16]. The Lang Rongrien in Krabi, Southern Thailand, was excavated in 1983, 1985 and 1990. According to D. Anderson, the site exposed 4 cultural layers. The uppermost (including layers from 1 to 4) was dated at circa 4,000 BP. The second (equivalent to layers 5 and 6) was 1.5m thick, yielding the Hoabinhian-style stone tools, dated at 7,000 BP – 8,600 BP. The third (layer 7) was 1m thick with no sign of artefacts (due to falling rocks). The fourth (layers 8, 9 and 10) was formed by human settlement. Layer 8 was of dates from 27,000 BP to 32,000 BP, layer 9 dated at 37,000 BP. The pre-Hoabinhian lithic industry is characterised by small-sized retouched flake tools made of chert or chalcedony. Tools and flakes accounted for almost 90%, core tools - under 4%. There was no molluscan shell except for 2 pieces from a bivalve in this deposit [13]. Ha Van Tan linked the flake industry of Lang Rongrien to the Nguomian of Vietnam and the Bailian cave of China. No evidence of any flake industry similar to the Nguomian (Thai Nguyen) and Lang Rongrien was found in the Northern Central region.

In the Cambodian territory, the only site classified into the Hoabinhian is Leang Spean cave, Battambang province. Up to now, the number of lithic artefacts in this assemblage has reached 9,500, 99.6% of which are flakes. The representative artefacts encompassed disc-shaped tools, short-axes, Sumatralith-style tools with

different variants. In 2012, Valer Zeitoun informed that pottery in Leang Spean comprised 2 groups: the cord - marked one (the late Hoabinhian dated at  $6,240 \pm 70$  BP) and the incised one (aged from  $3,970 \pm 90$  BP to  $4,000 \pm 90$ BP) [23, pp.529-537]. Also, at this cave, a French – Cambodian joint group of the prehistoric studies found the evidence of the first human occupation at a depth of 5m dated from 71,000 BP – 26,000 BP, pertaining to the flake tool industry in which flakes were knapped from multi-faceted cores using hard hammers, small-sized flakes, scrapers, tooth-shaped tools less than 50mm in dimension. The upper layer was 30-40cm aged from 11,000 BP to 5,000 BP, exhibiting charcoal remnants and animal remains from such species as bulls, cervids, pigs and rhinos, as well as lithic industries like sumatralith tools, the Hoabinhian-like choppers and chopping tools distributed widely across Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and in Sumatra island in Indonesia. The latest phase observed there was the Neolithic burial remnants at a depth of 1.2m dated at 3,300 BP [17, pp.1-15].

In Myanmar, the Hoabinhian-like early Neolithic cultural phase was known with Padah Lin cave located in the dense jungle west of the Shan plateau. U Aung Thaw thought that Padah Lin was an early Neolithic site comparable to the Hoabinhian and Bacsonian cultures of Vietnam [22].

#### 4. The late Neolithic

In the mountains of Nghe An, no signs of the middle Neolithic culture like the Da But

and Quynh Van cultures have been documented. The Da But culture was named after the site of Da But in Thanh Hoa, comprising 10 sites distributed on the coastal plains of the two provinces of Thanh Hoa and Ninh Binh, dated from 7,000 BP to 4,000 BP. The Da But residents occupied the coastal plain, growing some kinds of vegetation and tubers, doing a lot of fishing on rivers and the sea, as well as became the owner of one of the Neolithised centres on the coastal plains of Vietnam. The Quynh Van culture was named after a shell mound in Quynh Van village, Quynh Luu district, Nghe An province. Until now, 21 sites have been identified in this culture, distributing around the ancient bay in Quynh Luu district. Quynh Van residents mostly caught sea mollusks with no direct signs of farming and breeding. They were Australoid with the Mongoloid traits, whose culture progressed into the Bau Tro culture through the Thach Lac culture (in the Nghe - Tinh region, or the provinces of Nghe An and Ha Tinh).

People of Da But and Quynh Van cultures were originated from the Hoabinhian in the highland of the Northern Central region. In the course of development, these two cultures fundamentally transformed the technology of manufacturing lithic tools with the introduction of the fully-polished axes and pottery-making centres, speeding up the unequal development among residential communities in the coastal plain. In the meantime, in the mountains of the Northern Central region, the post-Hoabinhian residents still maintained the Hoabinhian traditions like cave occupation, hunting-gathering, making and using the Hoabinhian-style

pebble tools, with wholly-ground quadrangular axes and grinding stones occasionally observed in some places, and cord-marked and incised potteries introduced.

Representative of the cave sites in this period are Noong Mu 2 cave (upper layer), Pha Lai cave, Tham Bong, Tham Co Ngun (upper layer) and Bo 2 rockshelter. Furthermore, on the surface of some Hoabinhian sites in this region are sometimes encountered the late Neolithic relics such as wholly-polished shouldered axes and rectangular axes, cord-impressed and incised ceramics. In general, these sites exposed thin cultural deposits with a few artefacts, demonstrating a temporary and seasonal human settlement pattern. The residents could be viewed as those who stayed back in the limestone caves and continued the Hoabinhian and post-Hoabinhian traditions in the mountains of Vietnam's Northern Central region.

The Hoabinhian tradition in the Nghe An mountains was still preserved until the late Neolithic – early Bronze Age, whereas Bau Tro culture had appeared and reached a high-level growth on the plain. Up to the present, over 20 Bau Tro sites have been documented, which are distributed along the coastal plain from Nghe An to Quang Binh provinces, dated from 4,500 BP to 3,000 BP. The Bau Tro people practiced hunting, gathering, fishing, farming and producing lithics which reached a climax.

## 5. The Bronze Age

After 4,000 BP, in the upland, there might have been part of residential communities that moved to occupy the hills along both

sides of Ca river (also called Lam river) such as Den Doi, Den Van, Cua Rao, Khe Ngau, Ban Ang and Ban Lo (Xa Luong commune), Bai Bang Luc (Tam Quang commune) and Thach Hoa (Thach Gian commune). These people practiced hunting - gathering and fishing on the rivers and streams, manufacturing lithics and pottery as well as doing probably sedentary cultivation near water sources. Bronze tools were sometimes encountered in certain sites, confirming the establishment of the early Bronze Age in the Nghe An mountains.

Along with the open air residents, there existed Bronze Age ones who inhabited in caves. This is represented by the upper layer of Dong Truong cave, Anh Son district. The excavation trench yielded 16 earthened spindle whorls, 4,083 coarse sherds characteristic of the pre-Dong Son and Dong Son periods. In terms of texture, there were 1,504 red sherds with tempering of sand and little vegetational residues, as well as 2,430 grey-coloured potsherds with more coarser sands, high temperature and comparatively hard. Typologically, there are 4 types of vessel rims, of which the type of the gutter shape is prevalent, often seen in red colour, resembling that of Duong Co or late Go Mun in the Red River area. The other types with everted rims, upright rims and inturned rims are all in small quantities and mainly of grey colour. More than 70% of the 635 decorative potsherds are impressed with coarse cords, some with fine cords, variants of cords observed in the pattern of “custard-apple peel” or “honeycomb”, mesh and not very typical of Duong Co style (Hanoi). The paddle and anvil technique using spun cords were employed to form the overlapped motifs in



the base and body of the vessels. Other motifs such as plain cord, combing decoration, circle impression, pressing and incised patterns are not popular. The incised decoration showed its monotonousness in the form of mesh, V-shaped, triangular, petal-style curved lines, wave-like incised pattern on the background cords, and concentric-circle decoration that were common in the pre-Dong Son to Dong Son sites in Northern Vietnam.

There are 16 bronze items typical of Dong Son culture, including 2 socketed bronze axes (one with a square heel and the other in the form of a fish tail), 5 plain socketed and pierced knives with leaf-shaped edges, 1 socketed and pierced leaf-shaped spearhead, 2 D-sectioned bracelet fragments, 6 fragments of either basket-shaped containers or vessels, and 1 bronze bell similar to that of Lang Vac.

There are 11 transparent glass items with various colours: red, white, yellow, green and violet. Typologically, there are 7 bracelets (4 with a D-section, 2 with a T-section and 1 with a triangular section). There are 4 perforated beads (3 in a ball shape and 1 in the cubic rectangular shape).

Apart from that, some bronze artefacts like drums, axes, spearheads and bells in the style of late Dong Son period were found in Xa Luong commune of Tuong Duong district and the communes of Chi Khe, Chau Khe and Bong Khe of Con Cuong district.

## 6. Conclusion

The prehistoric culture of the uplands of Nghe An is as a basic part of the prehistory

of Vietnam's Northern Central region, playing an important role in the development of the prehistoric culture of Vietnam and mainland Southeast Asia.

The archaeological records from Tham Om cave in Quy Chau district attested that Nghe An's uplands is situated in the locale where modern human being came into existence at circa 60,000 BP and as a milestone of the ancient people in Vietnam. The ancient people continued to stay on the mountains of Nghe An and left their cultural vestiges behind in the upper layers of Tham Om, Tham Chang and several other caves dated ranging from 40,000 BP to 11,000 BP. The cultural remnants were also observed in the open sites like Lang Vac. The Paleolithic sites in this period bore the local traits of the Son Vi culture inherently distributed in high density across the midland of the North.

There are a large number of early Neolithic sites in the highland of Nghe An, all of which are limestone caves. They are of the essential characteristics of the Hoabinhian besides some distinct traits. They are considered the spans for the development of the Hoabinhian in Vietnam and mainland Southeast Asia.

The late Neolithic residents in the mountains of Nghe An kept their traditional patterns of hunting, gathering, particularly collecting molluscan species, short-term visits to the limestone caves, manufacturing and using wholly polished axes and pottery. Meanwhile, tribes on the coastal plain of the Northern Central region settled in the vicinity of the reservoirs, rapidly developing the hoe-using agriculture, catching sea products, expanding transport via waterways,

enlivening the course of exchange, integration and cultural acculturation.

The archaeology of Nghe An's uplands has been initially explored, but there remain a great deal of issues that need studying in the future. Individual archaeological sites are viewed as annals and the nation's identity cards. The prehistoric sites in Nghe An in particular and Vietnam's Northern Central region in general play an especially important role in the course of socio-economic growth of the region and the country, which needs to be studied, protected and promoted.

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