

# Vietnamese Archaeological Heritage Management as Public Archaeology: Current Situations and Problems in the Pre-Dong Son Underground Archaeological Sites

メタデータ	言語: eng 出版者: 公開日: 2021-09-10 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: グエン, フイ ニャム メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	<a href="https://doi.org/10.24517/00064100">https://doi.org/10.24517/00064100</a>

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 International License.



# Vietnamese Archaeological Heritage Management as Public Archaeology: Current Situations and Problems in the Pre-Dong Son Underground Archaeological Sites

Division of Human and Socio-Environmental Studies  
Graduate School of Human and Socio-Environmental Studies  
NGUYEN HUY NHAM

## Abstract

This paper explains the concept of using public archeology as a tool to identify related issues in Vietnam. Two prehistoric archeological sites, Thanh Den (Me Linh district, Hanoi city) and Dong Dau (Yen Lac district, Vinh Phuc Province), assigned to the Pre-Dong Son period (ca. 3500 BP – 2500 BP) and categorized as cultural-historical sites at the national level are used to examine how public archaeology/cultural heritage management is operating in Vietnam. First, through field data collection, questionnaire surveys, and interviews, this study indicates major issues that existed in the Vietnamese Law on Cultural Heritage and the decentralized model of cultural heritage systems in the locality. Second, this study defines a defective model of public engagement based on case studies about the Thanh Den and Dong Dau sites, where practicing public archeology is a challenge. In conclusion, this paper proposes multiple solutions to improve the Vietnamese Law on Cultural Heritage, the Vietnamese system of heritage management, and the perception of underground archeological sites.

## Keyword

public archaeology, public engagement, archaeological sites, heritage management, Vietnam

## ベトナムにおけるパブリックアーケオロジーとしての考古遺産マネジメント： 先ドンソン期の考古遺跡後をめぐる現状と課題

人間社会環境研究科 人間社会環境学専攻  
ゲエン フイ ニヤム

## 要旨

この論文は、ベトナムのパブリックアーケオロジーに関連する問題を見極めるための手段として、パブリックアーケオロジーの概念を進展させる。ベトナムでパブリックアーケオロジーと文化遺産マネジメントがどのように行われているか吟味するために、タインゼン遺跡（ハノイ市メリン県）とドンダウ遺跡（ヴァンフック省イェンラク県）という二つの先史時代遺跡に注目する。どちらも先ドンソン期（約3500年前～2500年前）に属し、国家レベルの文化歴史遺跡に認定されている遺跡である。フィールド調査で収集したデータ、アンケート調査、そしてインタビューを通し、この論文ではまず、ベトナム文化遺産法と文化遺産システムの地方分権型モデルが内包

する主要な問題を指摘する。次に、パブリックアーケオロジーの実践という重要な試みが進行中のティンゼン遺跡とドンダウ遺跡の事例研究にもとづいて、市民参加のモデルがもつ欠点を明らかにする。最後に、ベトナム文化遺産法、ベトナムにおける遺産マネジメントのシステム、地下に埋蔵された考古遺跡に関する人々の意識を改善するために、結論として、このペーパーでは複数のソリューションを提案する。

## キーワード

パブリックアーケオロジー、市民参加、考古遺跡、遺産マネジメント、ベトナム

## 1. Introduction

The practice of archaeological heritage management, conservation, and the promotion runs very differently in the countries crossing the world. In Vietnam, archaeological resources such as underground archaeological sites in contemporary contexts face major challenges. These challenges come from the obsolescence and the lack of updates of the Vietnam Law on Cultural Heritage, the lack of knowledge and skills to identify and solve problems of heritage managers and heritage researchers, and especially the lack of public participation in archaeological heritage management. As a result, many archaeological heritages are in danger of disappearing before being known, while other archaeological sites which seem to be well-known, have not been taken care of properly. This study selects Dong Dau and Thanh Den archaeological sites to examine how public archaeology is running in Vietnam.

## 2. Theoretical framework

In studies of archaeological heritage, the terms Archaeological heritage management (AHM); Cultural heritage management (CHM); Cultural resource management (CRM); or Public archeology (PA) are often used

interchangeably depends on the context of where the archaeological heritages belong to.

The specific definitions and practice of heritage "vary from one territory to another - and indeed the name by which it is called archaeological heritage management [Europe], archaeological resource management [UK], cultural heritage management [Australia], cultural resource management [USA] or public archaeology [USA]) will also vary - the underlying themes and operational practices are the same virtually everywhere. They have been adopted throughout the globe - in Europe, North America, Australia, Oceania, Africa and, increasingly, in Latin America. Recent efforts to introduce 'modern' heritage practices in Korea and Japan are of exactly the same kind. The anglophone international discourse of heritage is thus very powerful" (Carman 2002: 5).

The term of public archeology was first introduced in the United States in the 1970s. In a book of the so-called Public Archeology, McGimsey introduced this term to explain the need to preserve archaeological heritage to serve public benefits. The term public archaeology initially means by their expertise, archaeologists are supported by and on behalf of the public, try to record and preserve the archaeological sites which were threatened by construction works (McGimsey 1972: 5-6;

Merriman 2004: 3). The term was later adopted and widely used in the United Kingdom and the United States as a new field of archeology research.

Merriman explain the concept of "public" which includes two distinct meanings. "The first is the association of the word 'public' with the state and its institutions (public bodies, public buildings, public office, the public interest) ... The second is the concept of 'the public' as a group of individuals who debate issues and consume cultural products, and whose reactions inform public opinion" (Merriman 2004: 1).

It is noted that the term public archaeology was born and developed in English-speaking countries, so it will be difficult in translating exactly this term into the language of the countries which are not using English as a national language (Matsuda and Okamura 2011: 3). For instance, when translating from English to Vietnamese in a normal way, the term public means closer to "normal people" or "community" rather than "state" or "state institutions". Another way of translating, if based on the

current socio-political context in Vietnam, the term "public" when translated into Vietnamese also has a dual meaning when it implies both community and the state or institutions belong to the state. The Constitutional amendment of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam 2013 (National Assembly of 2013) stipulates that Vietnam is a socialist rule of law State of the people, by the people, and for the people (Article 2.1, Chapter 1). Citizens exercise their power through democracy which is represented by the National Assembly, the People's Councils, and other state agencies (Article 6, Chapter 1). State agencies are set up and represent the people of Vietnam. Through the decentralization of professional organizations and agencies, the state manages archaeological heritage through the legal system and provides funding for excavation. However, this way of translation and explanation does not accurately reflect the nature of the term public. This is a top-down explanation. If explained in this way, the voice and role of community participation in archeological activities in practice will not be emphasized, instead, the role

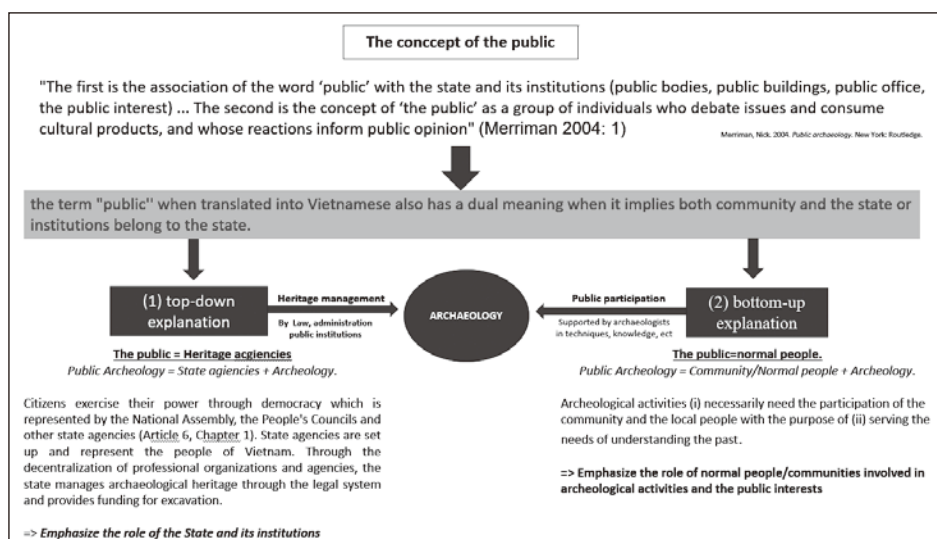


Figure 1. Conceptualizing "the public" in the context of Vietnam

of the state in archeological activities will be more emphasized. In this case, public archeology in Vietnam should probably be understood as "state archeology"/ archaeological heritage management or cultural heritage management. Therefore, the term public when translated into Vietnamese should be understood exactly as normal people or community. Public Archeology = Public + Archeology. It means archeological activities (i) necessarily need the participation of the community and the local people with the purpose of (ii) serving the needs of understanding the past. Whenever archeological activities ensure the two above factors, it will be considered as a proper public archeological activity. This view can be considered as a bottom-up explanation. In this way of explanation, on the one hand, the role of normal people/communities involved in archeological activities will be further emphasized. On the other hand, it is easy to distinguish from academic archeology (Academic Archeology = Academic + Archeology) which is taking place solely by archaeologists equipped with professional knowledge and skills to serve purely research and teaching jobs. (Figure 1)

#### ***Who are the public in Vietnamese public archaeology?***

This study uses a dual interpretation of Merriman on the public concept to determine who are the public in public archeology. As clarified in the concept of the public by Merriman (2004), all of those who are defined in detail in terms of the public should be members included in both state and normal people meaning. Two groups of the public need to be clarified here: (1) who belongs to the group of state and its institutions and (2) who are included in the group of normal people? In terms of the group of states and its institutions,

the public must be public administrators/ heritage managers who work in the field of heritage management and have the main duty of protecting, managing, preserving, promoting, and utilizing the value of heritage. Especially, bringing the past and its benefits closer to the public is the greatest goal of this group. The other group of the public is normal people/ general public. The specific classification and extent of public participation in this group are never fixed for all, instead, archaeological activities must be separately directed to each type of this group depending on the specific context of the place where the archaeological activity takes place. Normal people can be insiders and outsiders who live nearby or far from the local archaeological heritage in terms of geography; young and old people according to their age; male or female by gender; ordinary workers or business people in terms of their career; or the ethnic minority and majority of a nation. Determining specifically who are they in this group is challenging to come up with a common classification. The only thing to define this group is that they are non-specialists or non-archaeologists..

### **3. Dong Dau and Thanh Den as case studies**

Thanh Den and Dong Dau are two salient sites that have a huge significance for national history and a great potential for archaeological research. They are, so far, considered as the comprehensive evidence of the history date back to over 3500 years ago which are recognized as national-level sites. The results of excavations at these two sites prove that these sites have great significance to Vietnamese history when covering a sequence of archaeological cultural periods such as Phung Nguyen (4000–3500



Figure 2. Dong Dau is chopped up by cultivated fields

BP)-Dong Dau (3500–3000 BP)-Go Mun (3000–2500 BP)-Dong Son (2500–1800 BP). These two sites are extremely important living-evidence to prove the indigenous nature of Dong Son culture in Vietnam where the first Kingdom in Vietnam's territory borned.

#### ***Dong Dau archaeological site***

Dong Dau is an archaeological site which is located on a large mound with an area of about 86.000m<sup>2</sup> in Yen Lac town, Yen Lac district, Vinh Phuc province. The mound center has the coordinates of 21° 14'00.5 "N 105° 35'17.3" E. Dong Dau was first discovered in 1962. This site so far has undergone seven times of excavations.

The results of excavations indicate that Dong Dau is a witness to a long settlement period of ancient Vietnamese at the dawn of national history. This site is considered to be one of the most research potentials of the hundreds of ancient residence and burial sites of ancient Vietnamese discovered in the Northern part

of Vietnam. The archaeological significance of Dong Dau was first expressed through a very thick and clear cultural layer of all four stages of development from Phung Nguyen (4000–3500 BP), Dong Dau (3500–3000 BP), Go Mun (3000–2500 BP) to Dong Son (2500–1800 BP). The archaeological value of Dong Dau is also expressed through a large number of discovered objects. Through seven times of excavations with a total area of 778m<sup>2</sup>, out of a total of 86.000m<sup>2</sup> of Dong Dau, archaeologists have discovered over 265.000 pottery fragments together with 403 intact and restored objects; 1684 stone artifacts; 326 bronze artifacts; and 147 bone artifacts. These findings indicate that Dong Dau residents lived on hunting, fishing, and wet rice cultivating and mastered bronze casting techniques and implemented right here in Dong Dau. (Figure 2)

At present, most of the area at Dong Dau archaeological site is being used as cultivated surface and perennial plants by local people. To be convenient for looking after crops and



managing the Dong Dau site, some local households have built houses even at a small scale on top and the edge of the mound. Especially in the south and southwest of the mound, some local people have built houses and carpenter shops to encroach on a significant area of the site.

### ***Thanh Den archaeological site***

Thanh Den is an archaeological relic belonging to Phu My village, Tu Lap commune, Me Linh district, Hanoi with coordinates 21° 12'14.6"N 105° 40'11.7"E. Thanh Den has an area of about 40.000 m<sup>2</sup> and the terrain is about 0.8m higher than the surrounding ground. Thanh Den was first discovered in 1970 by local people. From that time to date, it has gone through three times of archaeological surveys and seven times of excavation with an area of 581.5m<sup>2</sup>.

Thanh Den is a crucial place of residence for the Vietnamese ancient people. The value of Thanh Den is represented by a less disturbed cultural layer and 100–250cm thick with extremely rich types and quantity of artifacts.

Through three times of archaeological surveys and seven times of excavations with an area of 578m<sup>2</sup>, archaeologists have discovered 51.4576 pottery fragments, 1336 intact vessels, 1628 stone artifacts, 447 bronze artifacts, 105 bone artifacts, and 2 graves which belong to the Dong Dau cultural period. In terms of the significance of Thanh Den, these artifacts provide explicit evidence of indigenous metallurgical development and wet rice cultivation in the period of Hung kings. "Thanh Den is one of the largest bronze manufacturing centers in the pre-Dong Son period of the Red River Delta. In Thanh Den, wet rice cultivation has been a popular practice. Thanh Den people cultivate different types of wet rice such as glutinous and non-glutinous rice and grow both the main crop and the winter-spring crop" (Lam Thi My Dzung 2015: 277–278). Since its great value, Thanh Den has been ranked as a National historical-cultural site in 1986 by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Currently, the whole area of the Thanh Den

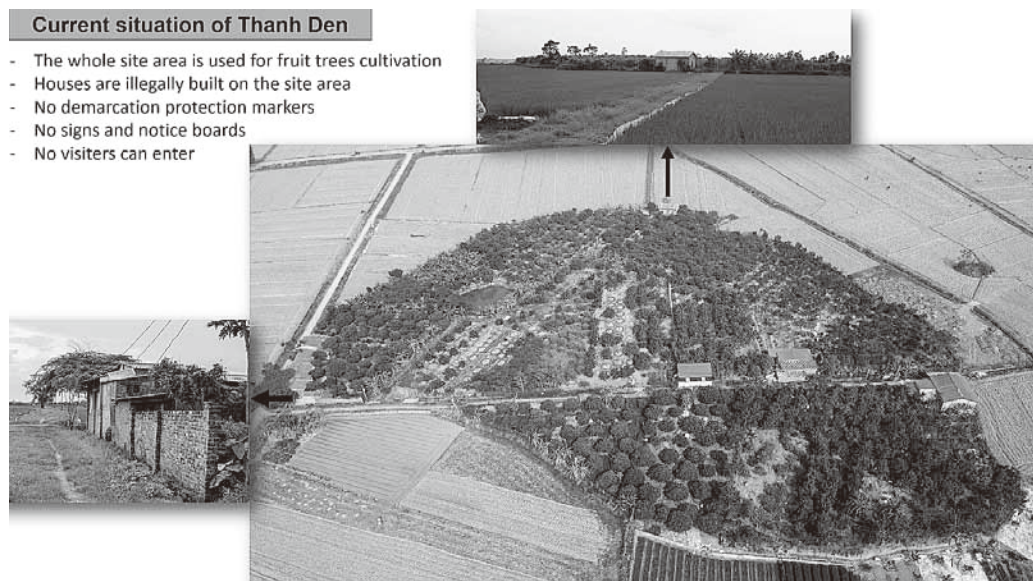


Figure 3. Thanh Den is cover by a green

archaeological site is used to grow fruit trees by local people. Besides, local people have built their own houses on the land area of the site. The planting of fruit trees and the construction of houses within the land area of Thanh Den, on the one hand, is improper to the heritage law, on the other hand, it causes disturbing the archaeological cultural layers underneath. (Figure 3.)

In general, Thanh Den and Dong Dau have similarities in terms of research value, the hierarchical rank of sites, and share the same problems in the actual state. Both sites have been classified as national-level sites, however, due to many reasons, they are currently abused and degraded over the years. If the local government does not have preventive measures and the change in the behavior to the heritage, then surely, these two archaeological sites will soon leave forever. Explaining why destructive activities are still happening in both Thanh Den and Dong Dau sites will be the focus of the next sections.

#### **4. From top-down explanation: failures of the Vietnam Law on Cultural Heritage and management system**

##### ***Limitations of the Vietnam Law on Cultural Heritage***

In terms of legal documents, “Vietnam currently has 1 law on cultural heritage; 1 amended law on cultural heritage; 8 decrees of the Government and 1 decision of the Prime Minister detailing and guiding the implementation of the law; 16 circulars and 4 decisions of the Minister mention the promulgation of the Regulations, statutes, and norms governing activities related to cultural heritage” (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism 2018: 4).

In 2001, the Vietnamese National Assembly

promulgated the Law on Cultural Heritage aiming to recognize and guard the country’s cultural heritage. This law was supplemented in 2009. Government efforts then created the necessary steps for the field of heritage management and conservation. The Government’s Resolutions Guidelines in the Implementation of Certain Papers in the Law on Cultural Heritage and the Amended Law, Some Additions to the Law on Cultural Heritage (2010); Government’s Resolutions Guidelines in the sanction of administrative violations on culture, sports, tourism, and advertisement (2013); Government’s Resolutions Guidelines on the Authority, Steps, and Procedure in the Development and Approval of Projects in Safeguarding and Restoration of Historical-Cultural Heritage and Attractions (2018); and other promulgated legal documents have created an essential legal framework in the field of heritage management. However, over a decade of implementation, the current Vietnam law on cultural heritage reveals significant limitations in the management and conservation of archaeological sites. The current law may not protect underground archaeological sites in safe. Many cases of violations of the Law on Cultural Heritage seriously but not yet severely dealt with, no cases have been examined for penal liability. The limitations of the current law are exposed clearly in the cases of Thanh Den and Dong Dau archaeological sites.

It is necessary to consider all provisions of the law which are relevant but not well applicable to the current heritage management at Thanh Den and Dong Dau. There are two limitations in the law on cultural heritage that need to be pointed out.

Firstly, ambiguous regulations on destructive heritage activities cause loopholes in the law.



According to the Vietnam Law on Cultural Heritage, the following activities are prohibited (Article 13):

1. The appropriation of cultural heritage for erroneous purposes.
2. Destruction or threatening to destroy cultural heritage.
3. Illegal archaeological excavations; illegal construction or expropriation of land at historical-cultural sites or scenic landscapes;
4. Illegal trading, exchange, or transport of relics, antiquities, or national treasures from historical-cultural sites or scenic landscapes; illegal shipment of relics, antiquities, or national treasures abroad.
5. Taking advantage of protection and promotion of cultural heritage in order to conduct illegal actions.

The Vietnam Law on Cultural Heritage refers briefly to activities of destroying cultural heritage. In terms of listing activities prohibited for archaeological heritage, Clauses 3 and 4 of Article 13 are quite specific above. However, the remaining provisions do not specify which else activities are considered acts of destroying or threatening cultural heritage. This has created a legal loophole in heritage management, especially in areas with underground archaeological sites. Other activities that put underground archaeological sites at risk of destroying or threatening cultural heritage such as building modern tombs, planting perennials trees, and cropping fruit trees in the protected area of heritage sites are not listed as prohibited activities in the Law on Cultural Heritage. In cases of Thanh Den and Dong Dau, local people even received permission from local authorities to carry out agricultural and fruit tree cultivation. In the long term, this farming

activity will disturb or even destroy the order of archaeological cultural layers beneath.

Secondly, confusing regulations on the responsibility and authority of individuals and organizations cause problems to determine who/which agencies are responsible for matters of Thanh Den and Dong Dau. When reviewing all the provisions of the Vietnam Law on Cultural Heritage, the author of this paper found that there is a paradox between heritage sites ranking authority and heritage management assignment. In this situation, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between the two concepts of "the authority in ranking heritage sites" and "responsibility for heritage managing". In other words, the agencies which are responsible for heritage ranking and the agency which are responsible for heritage management may not be the same. Specifically, Articles 30–31 stipulate the authority of which agencies to rank heritage sites from the central to local levels. However, no provision in the Vietnam Law on Cultural Heritage specifies management responsibilities for each ranked level of heritage sites.

Chapter II (Articles 14–16) of the Vietnam Law on Cultural Heritage mention the rights and obligations of individuals and organizations concerning cultural heritage. There are 3 groups such as (1) organizations and individuals (in general); (2) organizations and individuals that own cultural heritage; (3) organizations and individuals that are directly managing cultural heritage. However, the usage of the terms for the three groups mentioned above is relatively vague. This makes the reader cannot clearly identify which/who is the organization and individual mentioned. The author assumes that the first group represents normal people. The second group represents those who own antiques and national treasures. The third

group represents officials and people working in heritage management affairs. To know exactly which agencies and individuals are in charge, it must review additional management documents issued separately in each locality where the heritage sites belong to. The lack of provisions on the responsibility of individuals and organizations causes loose management, even the irresponsible attitude in heritage managers. This situation is happening in Thanh Den and Dong Dau as pieces of evidence of the limitations of the current Law on Cultural Heritage.

### ***State management of cultural heritage in overlapping jurisdiction***

To understand the state management system of cultural heritage at all levels in Vietnam, it is necessary to distinguish the three concepts such as management agencies (administrative agencies), specialized agencies, and public non-business units. In terms of responsibility, management agencies and their specialized agencies are in charge of all the problems relating to cultural heritage, while the public non-business units play the role of advising and assisting management agencies in performing their specialties.

<b>Distinction</b>	<b>Management agencies/ administrative agencies</b>	<b>Specialized agencies</b>	<b>Public non-business units</b>
<i>Definition</i>	It is an administrative body established by the Vietnam National Assembly or the People's Council to perform the function of state administration in all areas of social lives at the central and local levels.	Specialized agencies under the People's Committees are the agencies tasked to advise and assist the People's Committees of the same level in performing the state management function in their localities under the law.	Public non-business units are organizations established by competent state agencies under law. It has a legal status, provides public services, and serves state management.
<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ These agencies have the function of state administration in all areas of social lives.</li> <li>◦ Within the scope of its competence, state management agencies have the right to promulgate legislative documents or legislative enforcement documents; monitor the implementation of documents that it has issued.</li> </ul>	The specialized agencies under the People's Committees are under the administrative management of the People's Committees of the same level. They are also under the examination of the specialized agencies which are of the higher-level People's Committees on professional operations. For instance, the Departments of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the provinces/cities, at the same time, are under the administrative management of the People's Committees of the province/cities and the specialized management of the Ministry of Culture and Sports Tourism.	Public non-business units have no state power and state management functions such as institution building, inspection, handling of administrative violations. The main characteristic of non-business units is the not-for-profit operation, which is primarily for community service.

<i>Category</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ At the central level: State Government; Ministries</li> <li>◦ At loal level: provincial/municipal People's Committees; district-level People's Committees; commune-level People's Committees</li> </ul>	<p>Only at the local level :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Departments under provincial/municipal People's Committees such as <i>Departments of Culture, Sports and Tourism</i></li> <li>◦ Divisions under the district-level People's Committees such as <i>Divisions of Cultural Information</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ At the central level: Units under ministries and ministerial-level agencies such as the Department of Cultural Heritage</li> <li>◦ At the local level: Units under provincial/municipal People's Committees such as Management Boards of Cultural-Historical sites and Scenic Landscapes. Units of specialized agencies of provincial-level People's Committees; Units under the district People's Committees such as the Center for Culture, Sports and Media.</li> </ul>
<i>Principles of organization and operation</i>	Organized and operated on the principle of collective leadership (Members of State Government, members of People's Committees at the provincial/municipal, district, communal levels. )	Organized and operated on the principle of a leader (Director of Department; Head of Division)	Organized and operated on the principle of a leader (Director General; Head of Management Board; Director of the Center).

Article 55 of the Vietnam law on cultural heritage indicates that the management system of cultural heritage operates according to vertical administrative decentralization. This type of management model consists of two levels of management, such as central management (state management) and local management (Fig. 4). The term *central management* is equivalent to Ministerial and Departmental levels, while the *local management* refers to the province/city, district to commune levels.

At the central level of management, the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism is the highest management body to represent the State Government in administering the

heritage. The Department of Cultural Heritage is a subordinate unit of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism. It has the function of assisting the Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism in performing the task of state management over cultural heritage. In essence, the two bodies of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, and the Department of Cultural Heritage have the function of overseeing and guiding the implementation of heritage management by delegating to the local agencies.

At the local level of management, the People's Committee of the provinces/cities is directly responsible for protecting, managing, and promoting the value of cultural heritage in the

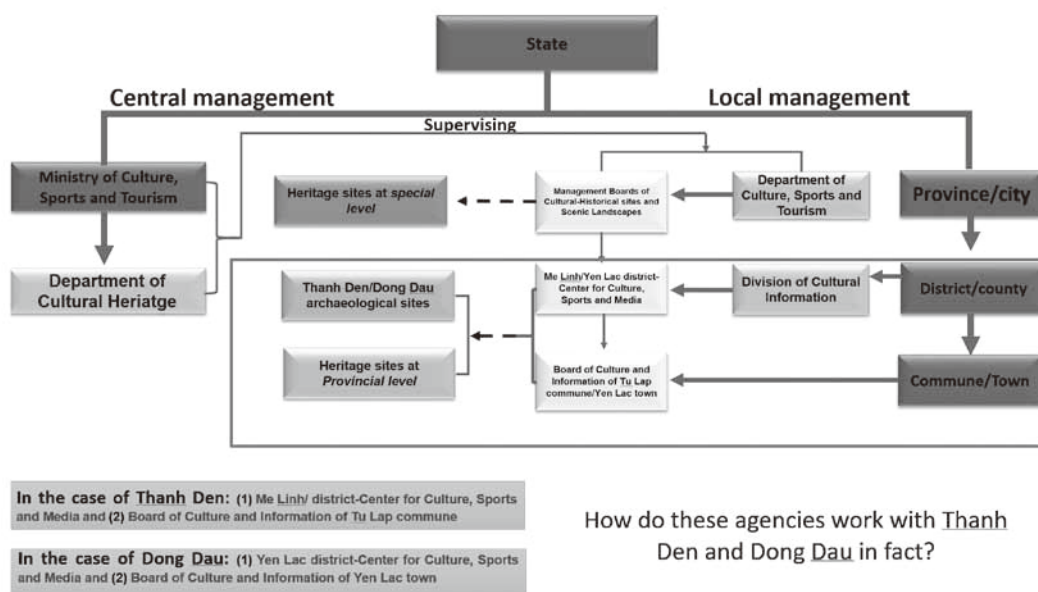


Figure 4. Agencies are in charge of Thanh Den and Dong Dau

localities on behalf of and decentralized by the state government. Three other sub-levels such as provincial, district, and commune levels divide as vertical administration belonging to the local level of management. In terms of function, the authorities in those sub-levels have the power to establish their specialized agencies responsible for heritage management to each level.

Although there are differences in administrative management levels, these agencies have no difference in the content of heritage management. Therefore, this situation leads to overlapping heritage management and problems in the law's enforcement in practice.

Based on analyzing the law and other legal documents the author of this paper found that: agencies at district and communal levels have to take the responsibility for matters of Thanh Den and Dong Dau sites (Figure 4).

Thanh Den and Dong Dau sites are designated as national-level sites. Therefore, the actions made by heritage managers of district and commune agencies are targeted to

discussing on how do these heritage agencies work with Thanh Den and Dong Dau in fact.

## 5. To bottom-up explanation: the defective model of Vietnamese public archaeology in fact

Public archeology is composed of two basic elements: public + archeology. Therefore, when considering the status of public archeology, it needs to consider the interaction between archeology and the public in a specific context of the archaeological sites. The author of this paper divides the basic activities of public archeology into three main activities corresponded to the mission of 3 groups of stakeholders such as heritage managers, archaeologists-museum curators, and local people as below:

- (1) public education activities: understood as propaganda activities about cultural heritage law and the value of heritage sites. This kind of activity is tied to the responsibility of heritage managers.

- (2) interpretation to local people: understood as reporting and interpreting archaeological excavation results such as exhibition and excavation visiting tours. This kind of activity is closely linked to the responsibility of archaeologists and museum managers
- (3) public engagement in cultural heritage management: understood as the participation responsibility to protect the heritage sites of all the local people.

Theoretically, all successful public archeology/heritage management activities need to have the full participation and coordination of the three related groups mentioned above. However, in reality, there is no full participation of stakeholders in public archeology activities at Thanh Den and Dong Dau. Survey results and interviews in Thanh Den and Dong Dau are summarized in a defective model of stakeholders' participation as follows:

Figure 5 depicts the relationship between three main stakeholders in Vietnamese public archaeology such as heritage managers, archaeologists-museum curators and local people. Heritage managers see underground archaeological heritage as objects that need to be managed through the law on cultural heritage

and a decentralized management system at all levels. Archaeologists consider underground archaeological sites to be subject to academic research and access directly through excavation. As for normal people, especially locals where archaeological heritage exists, they consider archeological heritage to be a cultural product that can obtain valuable knowledge. However, they could not access to an understanding of the heritage value without the intermediary support of two related groups such as heritage managers and archaeologists-museum curators. The intermediary supports in the above model are understood as public archeology activities within the participation of local people. Nevertheless, the interview and questionnaire survey results show that local people receive almost no supports and interactions from the stakeholders of heritage managers and the researchers-museum managers.

The data collection plan in Thanh Den and Dong Dau is divided into two phases in 2018–2019. In the first phase of fieldwork 2018, the author of this research conducted a questionnaire survey to local people who live near the sites. There are 40 participants at Thanh Den who have given the author the

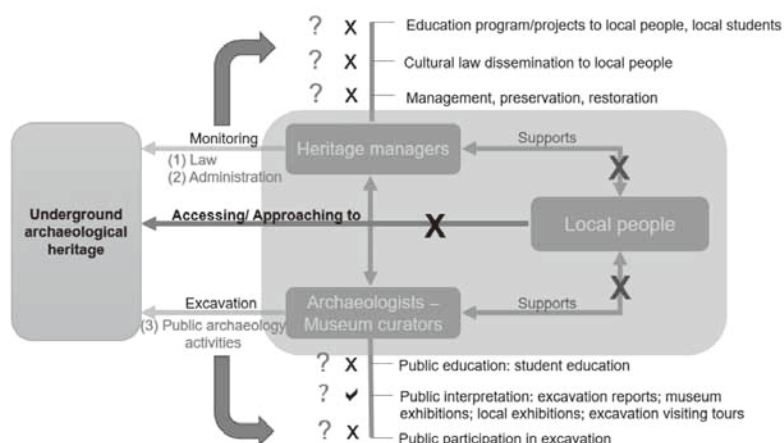


Figure 5. The defective model of Vietnamese public archaeology activities applied to Thanh Den and Dong Dau



## Questionnaire results 2018 -Thanh Den

## LOCAL PEOPLE

Q.1. Do you know the archaeological site of Thanh Den in your locality?

a. Yes, I do b. No, I don't (Those who choose this answer do not need to answer any more questions)

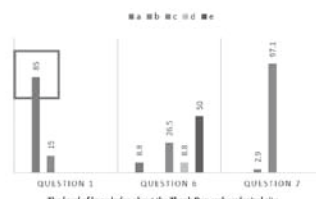
Q.6. Do you know how many times of excavation that Thanh Den archaeological site has undergone besides 3 times of surveying?

a. 7 times b. 8 times c. 9 times

d. 10 times e. None

Q.7. Do you know how many years ago that Thanh Den is dated back to?

a. 3000-3500 years ago b. 2500-3000 years ago c. I don't know



Q.8. Please evaluate the current status of Thanh Den archaeological site?

a. Very good b. Pretty good c. Slightly damaged

d. Seriously damaged e. Completely damaged f. Not interested/unknown

Q.10. How do you evaluate the management and conservation of Thanh Den archaeological site?

a. Very good b. Good c. Not very good

d. Very bad e. Do not know

Q.15. In your opinion, are the planting of agricultural/ fruit trees crops within the heritage area affecting to Thanh Den?

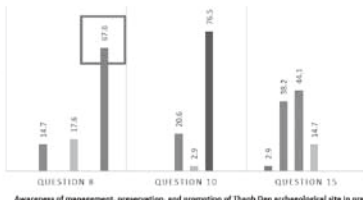
a. Very bad influence b. bad influence c. No influence d. Do not know

Q.21. Have you read the Vietnam law on cultural heritage?

a. Yes, I have b. No, I have not yet (Skip question no. 22-25)

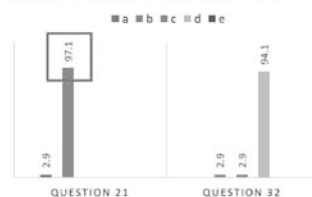
Q.32. How often do local authorities and cultural management agencies hold presentations or displays about the value of Thanh Den and the Vietnam law on heritage to local people?

a. Frequently b. Occasionally c. Don't know d. Never



Awareness of management, preservation, and promotion of Thanh Den archaeological site in practice

Question	a	b	c	d	e	f	SUM
8	5	5	5	5	5	5	34
9	3	3	3	3	3	3	23
10	3	3	3	3	3	3	23
11	5	5	5	5	5	5	34
12	5	5	5	5	5	5	34
13	5	5	5	5	5	5	34
14	5	5	5	5	5	5	34
15	5	5	5	5	5	5	34
16	5	5	5	5	5	5	34
17	5	5	5	5	5	5	34
18	5	5	5	5	5	5	34
19	5	5	5	5	5	5	34
20	5	5	5	5	5	5	34
21	5	5	5	5	5	5	34



The understanding level of the Law on Cultural Heritage

Question	a	b	c	d	e	SUM
22			1			1
23	1					1
24	1					1
25				1		1
26	32		2			34
27						0
28	4	27	1			32
29	29		3			32
30			28	6		34
31	32					34
32		1	1	32		34

Figure 6. Questionnaire results to local people at Thanh Den

feedback while the other 39 participants at Thanh Den agreed as respondents. In the second phase of fieldwork 2019, the author of this research conducted another questionnaire survey to local students who live near the sites. There are 119 participants at Thanh Den who have given the author the feedback while the

other 87 participants at Thanh Den agreed as respondents.

## Thanh Den archaeological site

Questionnaire survey results indicate that 67.6% of local people do not care about the current situation of the Thanh Den site and

## 2019-THANH DEN. Questionnaire survey-- LOCAL STUDENT

Q.8. Do you know the "Thanh Den" or "Thanh Trai" archaeological site?

a. Yes, I do b. No, I don't (Those who choose this answer please ignore question no.9)

Q.9. How do you know the name of Thanh Den archaeological site?

a. Hear from teacher b. Hear from parent/relative

c. Watch TV shows d. Other.....

Q.10. Have you ever visited the Thanh Den archaeological site?

a. Yes, I have b. No, I haven't yet (Those who choose this answer please ignore question no.11)

Q.11. Who takes you to visit archaeological sites of Thanh Den?

a. Teachers b. Father/mother c. Others.....

Q.12. Have you ever directly seen archaeologists working and excavating?

a. No, I have never b. Yes, I have

Q.13. Have you ever heard about the archaeological cultural periods such as Phùng Nguyên (4000-3500 BP) - Dong Dau (3500-3000 BP) - Go Mun (3000-2500 BP) - Dong Son (2500-2000 BP) yet?

a. Yes, I have b. No, I haven't

Q.14. How many thousand years old that the Thanh Den archaeological site is?

a. Approximately 3000 years old b. Approximately 2000 years old

c. Approximately 1000 years old d. I don't know

Q.15. Have you ever been to Hanoi Museum?

a. No, I haven't (Those who choose this answer do not need to answer the next questions)

b. Yes, I have ever

## STUDENT EVALUATION FOR HERITAGE EDUCATION ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOLS

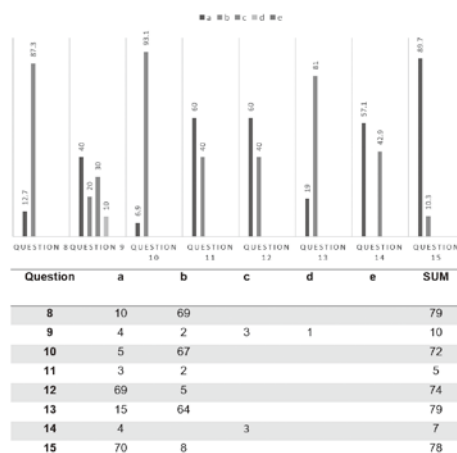


Figure 7. Questionnaire results to local students at Thanh Den

97,1% do not know the Vietnam law on Cultural Heritage.

Similar to local people, most students have no understanding of Thanh Den. The survey results of Q.8 show that 87.3% of students do not know the name of the Thanh Den archaeological site. Only 12.7% of students know the name of Thanh Den, however, 40% of them know about Thanh Den hear from their teachers and the remaining 60% know about Thanh Den because of their parents, watching TV programs, etc (Q.9). The survey results of Q.10 reveal that 93,1% of students have never visited the Thanh Den archaeological site while only 6,9% of students have visited Thanh Den. The survey results of Q.13 reveal that 81% of students have never heard about the dating periods of Phung Nguyen - Dong Dau - Go Mun - Dong Son. Only 19% have ever heard about those archaeological cultures, however, 42,9% of them do not know how many year-olds that Thanh Den archaeological site is dating to (Q.14).

From the data collected from interviews, the author of this paper found that local heritage agencies do not spend special attention to the Thanh Den site even though this is a national heritage site. Furthermore, local heritage agencies do not perform their duty as the requirement of the law on cultural heritage at the Thanh Den site.

*Do local authorities propagate and educate local people about the value of the Thanh Den archaeological site yearly?*

Nothing at all. We do not know anything about archaeological excavations that have been done in the past. I only heard the old villagers say that there were two famous sisters which were so-called Trung Sisters in history who built the citadel out there. Local villagers like us call this site

as Thanh Trai which is understanding of a high mound in the paddy field attached to the uprising of the Trung Sisters in the AD 40-43.

*Villager: Mr. N.V.T*

*(Thursday, December 19, 2019)*

*Have archaeologists ever organized public archeology programs in Thanh Den?*

Honestly, we have never organized. Although the book of Vietnam Archeological Basis mentions public archeology as one of the ten obligatory principles to be followed when conducting archaeological excavations and the law on cultural heritage also clearly stipulates the responsibilities of agencies in propagandizing to local people. There are very few excavations that can be done following the law on cultural heritage and the principles stated in archaeological books. Public archeology, therefore, has not yet become a binding responsibility for archeologists. The interaction between archaeologists with localities is mainly the handling of official documents and papers to legalize archaeological excavations.

In the process of excavation, archaeologists are always in the locality but due to the work is too busy and not always willing to spend a certain time and most importantly find a way to interact with local people. To be frank, public archeology in Vietnam has not been well and fully implemented.

*Professor Lam My Dung (An archaeologist of VNU who works as coordinator of an excavation project in Thanh Den 2010) - January 8, 2020*

### **Dong Dau archaeological site**

The survey results show that 94.5% of locals know the name of Dong Dau. However, 91.9% of

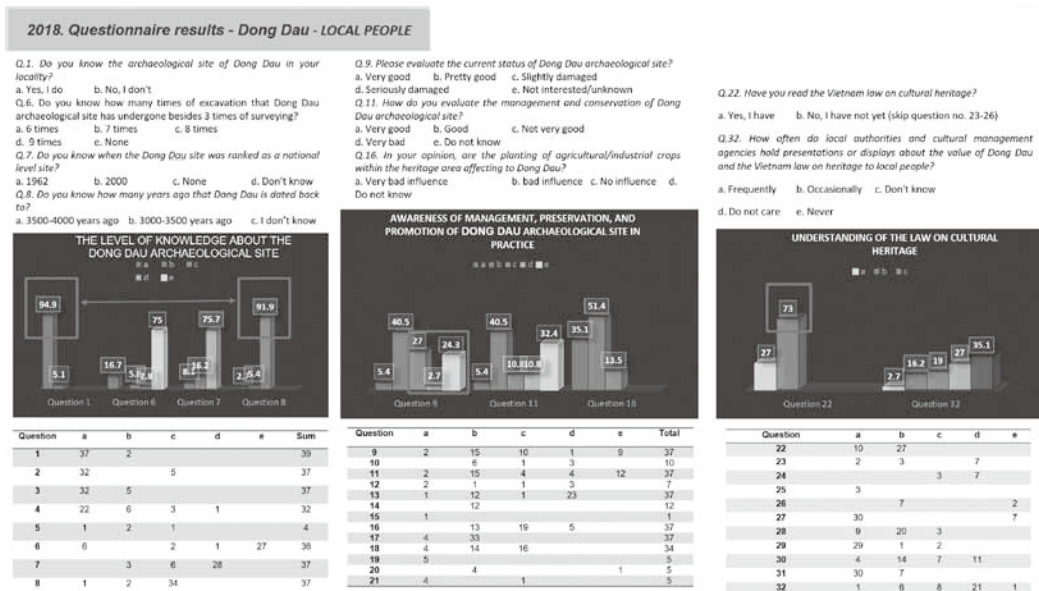


Figure 8. Questionnaire results to local people at Dong Dau

them do not understand this site, 29.7% of local people know the bad situation of Dong Dau, 73% of local people do not know the Vietnam law on Cultural Heritage. (Figure 8)

For local students, better than Thanh Den, the survey results at Dong Dau indicate that

97.5% of students know the name of the Dong Dau archaeological site, 64.9% have never heard about the cultures of Phung Nguyen - Dong Dau - Go Mun - Dong Son, and 56.9% know exactly how many year-olds that Thanh Den archaeological site is dating to. (Figure 8)

#### 2019-DONG DAU. Questionnaire survey – LOCAL STUDENT

- Q.8. Do you know the "Dong Dau" archaeological site?  
a. Yes, I do b. No, I don't (Those who choose this answer please ignore question no.9)
- Q.9. How do you know the name of Dong Dau Archaeological site?  
a. Hear from teacher b. Hear from parent/relative  
c. Watch TV shows d. Other.....
- Q.10. Have you ever visited the Dong Dau archaeological site?  
a. Yes, I have b. No, I haven't yet (Those who choose this answer please ignore question no.11)
- Q.11. Who takes you to visit archaeological sites of Dong Dau?  
a. Teachers b. Father/mother c. Others.....
- Q.12. Have you ever directly seen archaeologists working and excavating?  
a. No, I have never b. Yes, I have
- Q.13. Have you ever heard about the archaeological cultural periods such as Phung Nguyen (4000-3500 BP) - Dong Dau (3500-3000 BP) - Go Mun (3000-2500 BP) - Dong Son (2500-2000 BP) yet?  
a. Yes, I have b.No, I haven't
- Q.14. How many thousand years old that the Dong Dau archaeological site is?  
a. Approximately 3000 years old b. Approximately 2000 years old  
c. Approximately 1000 years old d. I don't know

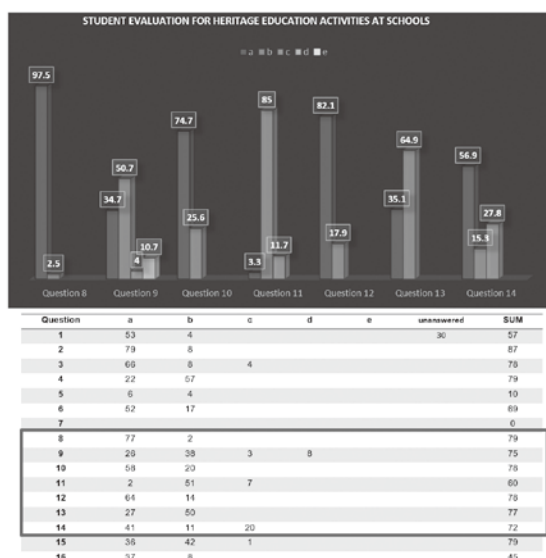


Figure 8. Questionnaire results to local student at Dong Dau

The data collected from interviews show that the local government has not fulfilled its responsibility for managing cultural heritage. Besides, there are not public archeology activities have organized so far by archaeologists.

*Does Yen Lac district keep scientific records of Dong Dau in stores?*

No, it does not. The scientific records of Dong Dau were kept in the Province. The district only plays an intermediary role. Completion of heritage site records must be done at the provincial level, not the district level. After finishing the dossier, the provincial level only sends to the district level the resume of the site.

*What about the management authority of the Yen Lac district?*

The district assigns Yen Lac town and Yen Lac town to appoint one sitter (Mrs. Sinh) to take care of the whole area, which will also receive a 0.2% allowance according to the provincial decision.

This is a national heritage site so the ministry is responsible for the highest management. However, the direct management authority is the Yen Lac town. In fact, the district only plays an intermediary role.

*Do you think whether the planting of perennial crops and agricultural cultivation in Dong Dau will negatively affect this site?*

Permission to farming households cultivate in the core area of Dong Dau is not following the law on cultural heritage. Most of the Dong Dau area has been allocated to farmers for up to 50 years for cultivating. If the management at all levels wants to preserve the site, they must buy land from the people. In the long term, if local people

change the purpose of using land, local governments will difficultly recover the land.

*Ms. Nguyen Hai Yen (The division of Culture and Information at Yen Lac district, Vinh Phuc province) - December 28, 2019*

Archaeologists, including myself, have not had a clear awareness of organizing educational programs on archaeological heritage value and the law on cultural heritage to local people that are associated with long-term research at archaeological sites. Most archaeologists only come to the site for excavations and return to their research units after finishing the excavation without the programs to announce the excavation results to the local people. The truth is that public archeology was not implemented after excavation in practice. That is a limitation.

*Dr. Bui Huu Tien  
(An archaeologist and museum curator at VNU) - January 8, 2020*

In summary, survey and interview results indicate that there are almost no public archeology activities conducted and participated by three stakeholders: heritage managers, archaeologists-museum curators, and locals at both Thanh Den and Dong Dau. There no support from heritage managers and archaeologists to local people. Local people, therefore, cannot access to archaeological heritage values.

- Local people and students at Thanh Den and Dong Dau are not knowledgeable about the value of heritage sites
- Local heritage management agencies do not pay special attention to archaeological heritages. The managers showed a lack of responsibility in managing, protecting the

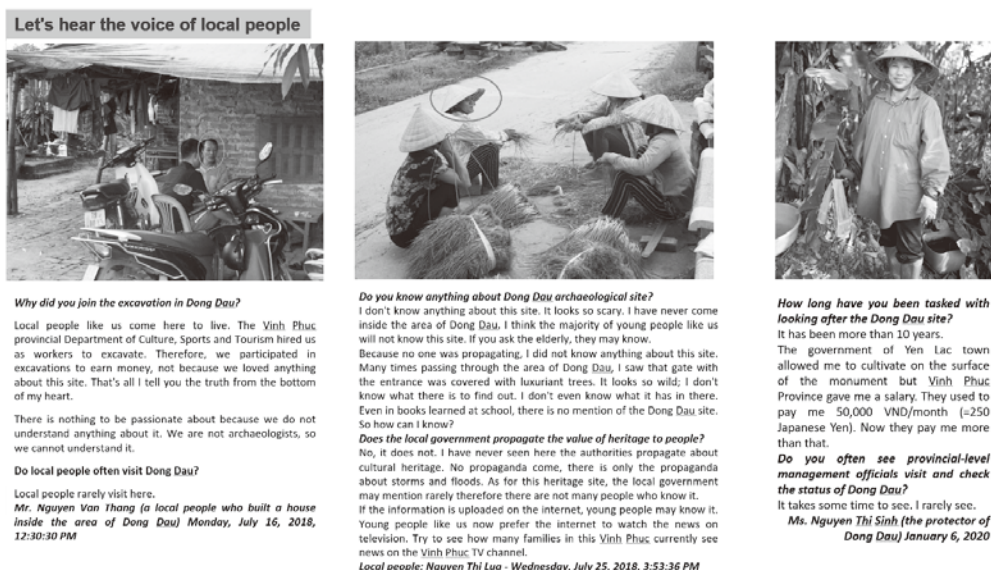


Figure 9. Let's hear the voice of local people at Dong Dau

heritage, and propagating the heritage value to the people.

- Archaeologists-museum curators do not organize community archeological activities such as publishing excavation reports, displaying artifacts, or organizing excavation visiting tours.

From case studies of Thanh Den and Dong Dau archaeological sites, three basic elements of Vietnamese public archeology are not well and fully implemented:

- There is a lack of stakeholder partnership in archaeology
- There is a lack of public education in archaeological heritage management
- The public interpretation is not often practicing

## 6. Solution and conclusion

To save Thanh Den from destruction, it is necessary to have the coordination of implementation and participation of the

authorities and local people. Local authorities need to fulfill their responsibility to protect national heritage following the provisions of the Law on Cultural Heritage and the decentralization of the Hanoi People's Committee. All agricultural activities and housing construction within the Thanh Den site are contrary to the Cultural Heritage Law and must be terminated. Local people need to coordinate with local authorities in protecting Thanh Den archaeological heritage.

The author of this paper proposes some specific immediate solutions as follows:

- Firstly, it is necessary to clear all fruit trees and houses built by the local people within the Thanh Den site area. The clearance of encroachments of local people should be conducted based on positive discussions and propaganda of heritage values to local people.
- Secondly, after removing all the agents affecting Thanh Den, excavations and surveys are needed to assess the extent



of the impact caused by farming and construction activities of the local people. Through excavation and survey, it is necessary to give an accurate size of areas that are still researchable and areas that are no longer researchable.

- Thirdly, based on the assessment of the status of Thanh Den after excavation and survey, it is necessary to develop a project to preserve and promote the heritage value in the long term to serve the public with the full participation of the local public, authorities, and archaeologists-museum curators. To develop a project to preserve and promote the value of the Thanh Den heritage, it is necessary to organize seminars/workshops to consult domestic and foreign experts and listen to the aspirations of the local people. Whether conservation of Thanh Den in the form of ex-situ or in-situ conservation, the role of public participation from the construction process to implementing the conservation project is a vital condition.
- Fourthly, the author of this dissertation proposes to build an on-site museum attached to the conservation plan based on discussions of local authorities, local people, and archaeological museum experts. Geographically, Thanh Den is located in the middle of a rice field in a rural area that is dozens of kilometers from the center of Hanoi while its excavated artifact is stored in a museum in central Hanoi. The distant geographical distance between the Thanh Den site and the artifact storage place makes it more or less difficult and ineffective in unifying the management of Thanh Den

archaeological heritage as well as the movement of visitors from the site to the storage of discovered artifacts. Therefore, the construction of a new museum to store artifacts in place for Thanh Den will bring practical effects to the dissemination of the value of the heritage to the public, especially for local people.

- Finally, archaeologists should publish information and report excavation results to local authorities. The interview information indicates that the local heritage management officers at the commune level do not have any excavation and artifact information about Thanh Den archaeological site, even do not know that Thanh Den is designated as a national heritage site. Based on the published excavation results, archaeologists-museum curators and local managers should immediately organize thematic exhibits on the process of the discovery and excavation of Thanh Den and discovered artifacts to provide information about heritage values and raise awareness of heritage protection for local people.

In the case of the Dong Dau site, right after Dong Dau was classified as a national heritage site in 2000, local authorities and archaeologists carried out some activities that were considered as a premise for the process of preserving and promoting the value of archaeological heritage, namely:

In 2001, the People's Committee of Vinh Phuc province proposed to implement a project "Master plan of Dong Dau archaeological site with a vision to 2020" with the advice of archaeologists of the Vietnam Institute of Archeology. This master plan aims to identify

the protection scope of Dong Dau and turn Dong Dau to become one of the cultural centers, serving the purpose of long-term scientific research and socio-economic development program of Yen Lac district and Vinh Phuc province. Here is some basic information about the project content related to Dong Dau:

- Total planning area: 50.1 ha
- Planning objects: Dong Dau Archaeological Site, Bien Son Pagoda, Gia Loan Temple.
- Stage implementation:

2002–2005: To protect and preserve the original status of Dong Dau; prepare archaeological materials and content for the construction of museums and display areas at Dong Dau archaeological site.

2005–2020: To carry out archaeological site restoration and other activities to promote historical-cultural-educational values through tourism activities. Also, it is necessary to develop the complex of Dong Dau archaeological site - Bien Son pagoda-Gia Loan temple into a center of Cultural-Historical Park.

In February 2002, the People's Committee of Vinh Phuc province and the Vietnam Institute of Archeology organized a scientific conference "40 years of discovery and research of Dong Dau culture". After the discussion of this conference, Vinh Phuc People's Committee has directed the provincial cultural department, the authorities of Yen Lac district, and Yen Lac town to build gates, protective fences, zone the management of Dong Dau, and focus on preserving and promoting the values of Dong Dau archaeological site.

However, nearly two decades have passed, the contents of the discussion at the Conference and the Dong Dau Master Plan have not been fully and seriously implemented. The goal of building an outdoor gallery here is still on paper,

while the construction of a fence to protect the site has only been partially implemented.

The author of this paper proposes some urgent actions to rescue the archaeological site of Dong Dau as follows:

- All of the activities that cause damage to Dong Dau are not continuing permitted. All sun-drying woodworks and encroached activities in the area of Dong Dau archaeological sites should be strictly prohibited. The local authorities should take strict and timely measures to dismantle carpenter workshops and houses encroaching on the core area of the Dong Dau site to return its original natural landscape of the mound.
- It is urgent to cut down all perennial trees and do not replant these trees.
- It needs to supplement a system of surrounding walls to protect Dong Dau in the area bordering residential areas in the southwest of the mound and to prevent the process of encroaching on the site's land.
- Planning to protect and preserve the landscape of Dong Dau such as swamps, surrounding fields are needed. They are inseparable habitat parts of the Dong Dau site in history.
- It is recommended to do further research to complete the record of Dong Dau for the recognition of this site as a special national-level site.
- Local authorities need to organize heritage education programs for local people to get a better understanding of the great value of Dong Dau. The first subjects of education should be students. Besides, exhibits of Dong Dau's excavations and reports are also

necessary activities to change and raise awareness of local people on heritage conservation.

- It is necessary to restart and perform again as quickly as possible the Master plan of Dong Dau archaeological site that was proposed from 2001 with the new extended period to 2030 or even longer periods. All project goals need to be strictly followed by local authorities.

In summary, this paper focuses on current situations and issues in Pre-Dong Son underground archaeological sites in the northern part of Vietnam. Two underground sites that have been designated as national heritage sites are selected as case studies to examine how heritage management/public archaeology is operating in Vietnam.

The author has applied a dual definition of the concept "the public" by Merriman, Nick as the theoretical basis in this study. Furthermore, based on the context of managing archaeological heritage in Vietnam, the author has developed the theoretical basis of Merriman, Nick into a two-way model of public archeology in Vietnam that should be considered including (1) top-down explanation and (2) bottom-up explanation. The result of this study is summarized by a defective model of Vietnamese public archeology in the case study of Thanh Den and Dong Dau with the data confirmed by local people, students, heritage managers, and archaeologists-museum curators.

The defective model indicates three main issues of public archeology in the case of Thanh Den and Dong Dau:

- (1) The Vietnam Law on Cultural Heritage must be a legal basis that allows all public archeological activities to take place. However, the current law does not have specific and clear regulations that encourage and support normal people to participate in public archeology/heritage management activities.
- (2) The ineffectiveness of the heritage management model with underground archaeological heritage. Activities of management, protection, conservation, and promotion of heritage values have not been fully implemented. Education activities on cultural heritage are ineffective and not implemented as the regulations in the law.
- (3) The lack of interaction between the element "archeology" (which is represented by archaeologists- museum curators) and "the public" (which is represented by the two distinct groups: heritage managers and the local people) in the addition of public + archaeology has led the damage at Thanh Den and Dong Dau sites. Heritage managers and state institutions must support local people through activities of education projects on cultural heritage and law dissemination programs. However, there is no activity has been implemented at Thanh Den and Dong Dau. Archaeologists-museum curators should do the supports to local people as their mission must be. It can be educational programs on archaeological excavation; reports on archaeological excavations; and even excavation tours during the excavated time. However, not all those activities have been implemented at Thanh Den and Dong Dau archaeological sites.

## References

1. Ascherson, N. (2000). Editorial. *Public Archaeology* 1 (1), 1-4.
2. Carman, J. (2002). *Archaeology and Heritage: an introduction*. London: Continuum.
3. Grima, R. (2016). *But Isn't All Archaeology 'Public' Archaeology?* *Public Archaeology* 15 (1), 50-58. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14655187.2016.1200350>
4. Holtorf, C. (2007). *Archaeology is a Brand! The Meaning of Archaeology in Contemporary Popular Culture*. Oxford: Archaeopress.
5. King, T. F. (2008). *Cultural Resource Law and Practice, third edition*. Lanham: Altamira Press.
6. Matsuda, A. (2016) . A Consideration of Public Archaeology Theories. *Public Archaeology* 15 (1), 40-49. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14655187.2016.1209377>
7. McGimsey, C.R. (1972). *Public Archaeology*. New York: Seminar Press.
8. McManamon, F. P. (1991). The many publics for archaeology. *American Antiquity* 56 (1) : 121-30.
9. Merriman, N. (2004). *Public archaeology*. New York: Routledge.
10. Moshenska, G. (2009). What is Public Archaeology? *Present Pasts* 1 (1), 46-48. doi:10.5334/pp.7
11. Moshenska, G., & Dhanjal, S. (2011). *Community Archaeology Themes, Methods and Practices*. Oxford: Oxbow Books
12. Moshenska, G. (2017). *Key Concepts in Public Archaeology*. London: UCL Press
13. Okamura, K. (2011). From Object-Centered to People-Focused: Exploring a Gap Between Archaeologists and the Public in Contemporary Japan. In K. Okamura, & A. Matsuda (Eds.), *New Perspectives in Global Public Archaeology* (pp. 77-86). New York: Springer.
14. Okamura, K. & Matsuda, A. (2011). Archaeological Heritage Management in Japan. In K. Okamura, & A. Matsuda (Eds.), *New Perspectives in Global Public Archaeology* (pp. 99-110). New York: Springer.
15. Pyburn, K. A. (2011). Engaged Archaeology: Whose Community? Which Public? In K. Okamura, & A. Matsuda (Eds.), *New Perspectives in Global Public Archaeology* (pp. 29-42). New

York: Springer.