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VIETNAM: MEMORIES AND MEANING

The Vietnamese Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium: A Study of the Pioneering Works of Gustave Emile Dumoutier (1850–1904)

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As East-West contacts led to tumultuous times, the old culture tended to fade out as a new one arose. This changed not only the social system but also the way of thinking of many in the affected countries, particularly scholars. While traditional culture is proudly honored in Asian societies, the resulting changes and adaptations from Western contact often led to humiliation, dishonor, conflicts, and social disturbances. Taking Vietnam as the example, this essay examines the works of one of the earliest French scholars and colonial administrators, Gustave Dumoutier (1850–1904), to understand how the colonial educational system affected artistic and academic disciplines and changed the intellectual order in the country forever.

Keywords: Colonialization; Dumoutier; Quốc ngữ; Spirit of innovation; Vietnam

Prelude

History begins with hate and love. We know that in recent history the impact of Westernization upon the world has been enormous. This impact has not occurred without humiliation, conflicts, and social disturbances, but it has also had its honors, adoptions, and adaptations. While engaged in military conflicts, one society might embrace the other's culture as its own heritage. In the spectrum of globalization, this is one way in which the world's cultures come together. The cultural transformations and adaptations in Vietnam, especially during the period of colonization, involved a set of changes to the indigenous concepts of everything from technology, the arts, economic considerations, to social and political organizations. These cultural changes have had profound and lasting influences, many of which have been etched forever in the minds of the Vietnamese people.

According to Bruno Nettl in his book *Western Impact on World Music* (1985), the French colonial army and the Catholic Church promulgated the intensive diffusion of Western elements derived from European values to the colonies. As far as the facts of history can be pinned down, the modern European era of imperialism in Vietnam began in 1787 when Monseigneur Pigneau de Béhaine, a Catholic priest, convinced King Louis XVI that the time was right to conquer Vietnam. De Béhaine, who led the Seminary of the Holy Angels, took it upon himself to relocate the Paris Foreign Missions Society to Hà Tiên, Vietnam, from Ayutthaya, Thailand (Mantienne 1999, 49). The French troops, led by General Thomas de Conway, followed soon thereafter.

The French fleets captured the port of Tourane (now Đà Nẵng) in 1858 and Saigon in 1859. Subsequently, Vietnamese emperors were compelled to grant the French control of several provinces, the first three in 1861, then more southern provinces. They were also coerced into granting legal status to the Catholic missions, as well as commercial concessions, which facilitated the opening of the ports to commerce with the West (Cima 1989, 24).

With French military conquest came French intellectual curiosity. Some of those exhibiting such curiosity were conspicuously paternalistic, while others showed significant erudition and a stance of inquiry that indicated a greater respect for Vietnamese intellectual achievements. This paper is the first to focus on

Gustave Dumoutier, a great educator and scholar, whose substantial works have, unfortunately, not been widely studied. It also refers to the period of time at which modern notions of scholarship began and from which Vietnamese traditions of historiography witnessed a lasting, if contrasting, Western influence. Indeed, the last two centuries of the second millennium AD have provided us with an irreversible picture of change in the domain of research and education in Vietnam.

The Traditional Background

Before the modern education system took root in Vietnam, the Chinese annexation period (intermittently from 111 B.C. to 939 A.D.) successfully indoctrinated Vietnamese elites into Chinese cultural, religious, political, and economic dominations, despite great resistance and hostility toward Chinese rule on the part of the Vietnamese. For example, the dominant linguistic practice among elites in Vietnam today, the Han-Viet, is a combination of the Chinese language and local Vietnamese pronunciation. It is based on the Chinese writing system known as *Hán Văn* 漢文, which was also adopted in Japan as *Kanbun* and in Korea as *Hanmun*, and localized and vocalized into Vietnamese, Japanese, or Korean usages that were not comprehensible to Chinese speakers.

Following the fall of the Han Dynasty in China in 220, the Han-Viet scholar-officials gained a sense of strength at being accepted into the administration. Indeed, scholarship in the classical Chinese language dates back to the time of the introduction of Buddhism by sea from India to Giao Châu (now Vietnam) during the first three centuries AD. The spread of Mahayana Buddhism strengthened both the study of Han-Viet and a nationalistic engagement. This new religion was blended and quickly integrated into the traditional customs of Vietnam and elsewhere in Asia as the people's own. In the third century, historical records revealed that ten sutras were translated into Vietnamese from Sanskrit for a community of five hundred Shanga members across twenty temples (Nguyen 1982). This discovery marks a landmark of the religious and philosophical studies of Vietnam. Buddhist scholarship was later included in the national education of the Three-Pillar Foundation (Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism), for which the Confucian examinations served as the standard throughout history. Students studied canonical texts such as *Nhân thiên tự*

(Study in Thousand Words), *Sử học vấn tân* (New History Inquiry), *Ấu học ngũ ngôn thi* (Preliminary Five-Word Poetry), *Minh tâm bảo giám* (Clarity of Heart), *Minh đạo gia huấn* (Great Morality Instruction), *Tam tự kinh* (Book of the Three-Word Recitations), *Tứ Thư* (Four Books), *Ngũ Kinh* (Five Classics), as well as many other Buddhist and Daoist books.

Triennial examinations in the Chinese classics provided an opportunity for students to be accredited as degree holders, scholars, and eligible for positions in the government. They were seen as real leaders in the fields of cultural studies, politics, and administration, especially since the independence of the country in 1939 from the Chinese. The last national examination of this kind, however, took place in the City of Nam Định in 1919. The total number of doctoral graduates since the Lý Dynasty (1010–1225), as recorded at the Temple of Literature in Hanoi, amounts to over a thousand up to that year, which marks the end of classical studies in Vietnam. Unlike Japan and Korea, Vietnam no longer requires the study of Chinese in its national education system. It began to engage a modern scholarship after 1919, involving basically two kinds of writing systems: French and the *quốc ngữ* ('national language'). These were the official languages at the turn of the millenium. The *quốc ngữ*, which was invented by European missionaries working with a number of their Vietnamese acolytes, is a Romanized character system initially used in research. It gradually replaced French in schooling, cultural studies, and administrative documents beginning in the 1940s and is now the normative orthographic system.

Dumoutier and the New Era

In this paper I will examine the works in French by one of the earliest and most prominent scholars of Vietnam, Gustave Emile Dumoutier, who contributed to the inception of Vietnam's modern scholarship. His impact can be seen across artistic and academic disciplines as well as in changes to the intellectual order in contemporary Vietnam.

Gustave Emile Dumoutier was born in Courpalay, France, on June 3, 1850. He graduated with a degree in the Chinese and Vietnamese languages from the *Ecole de langues orientales* (School of Oriental Languages), and was later appointed to various

important positions in the colonial government in Hanoi by Dr. Paul Bert, whom he had met at a museum in Paris. Bert became Résident Général (in Vietnamese, 'Thống sứ') in January 1886, and appointed Dumoutier as Inspector of Education of Annam and Tonkin and Correspondent of the *Ministère de l'Instruction publique et des beaux arts pour travaux scientifiques et historiques* (1886) (Ministry of Public Education and Fine Arts for Scientific and Historic Works). By the time he completed his major book on education (published in 1887), Dumoutier had also served as Interpreter of Vietnamese and Chinese for the Residence General of the French Republic in Hanoi, and Organizer and Inspector of the Franco-Annamite Schools in Tonkin. He was honored by the French government with the title of "*Officier de l'Académie*" (Academy Officer) and the "Protectorate" government of Annam in Huế as Officer of the "*l'Ordre impérial du Dragon de l'Annam*" (Imperial Order of Dragon of Annam). As was the custom in historic Vietnamese society, Dumoutier was deemed a privileged person due to his status as a scholar-official.

Dumoutier was among the first Westerners to explore the multifaceted cultural expressions of the colony in Vietnam. His philosophical approach was strikingly different from that of his peers. Rather than designating his observations as "exotic," "strange," or "peculiar," Dumoutier, throughout his works, refers to the colonized people's culture as *vrai* (true) and *humaine* (human). In his book on folk songs, for example, he writes "*La chanson populaire est l'expression spontanée d'un sentiment intime et vrai; c'est l'âme humaine vibrant sans contrainte et donnant toute sa gamme, criant ses joies, ses douleurs, ses préférences, ses répulsions. C'est le coeur d'une nation mis à nu.*" (Folksong is a spontaneous expression of the intimate and real sentiment; it is the human soul, vibrating without restraint and giving all the spectrum, calling out joys, sufferings, preferences and repulsions. It's the heart of a nation all exposed). (Dumoutier 1890).

Furthermore, Dumoutier attempted to understand Vietnamese culture based on its original values, and to close the gap between the two peoples, within the allowed context of colonization. As Dumoutier puts it, "*Ce livrée n'est pas une oeuvre littéraire, c'est un document psychologique. Nous ne souhaitons pas qu'il plaise, par*

son originalité, nous désirons qu'il soit, comme document, utile aux annamites et aux français en faisant mieux connaître au peuple Protecteur la nation protégée." (This book is not a literary work; it's a psychological document. We are not expecting that it pleases, by its original value; we hope, as a document, it would be helpful to the Annamites and, also, the French to better understand to the Protecteur people that of the "protégé" nation.)

L'Académie tonkinoise (Tonkinese Academy or 'Bắc kì hàn lâm viện'), founded by Paul Bert on July 3, 1886, manifested by governmental decree not only a policy, but an ideal nurtured with great ambitions by academics-administrators like himself and Dumoutier. The decree could be viewed as resulting from the interests of the scholarly associations that had been established in France, particularly the *Académie des sociétés savantes* (Academy of the Elites) and *Association française pour l'avancement des sciences* (French Association for Advancement of Sciences). In the atmosphere of colonialism-imperialism in the late nineteenth century, a fertile domain opened for an interest in cultural learning. Dumoutier was instrumental in taking advantage of this cultural moment by working diligently to preserve steles, inscriptions, and monuments, and initiate ethnographic research in Vietnam.

It is worth noting that, from a political point of view, the French colonial period in Vietnam was characterized by the elements of association, inter-influence, and collaboration. The *Académie Tonkinoise*, consisting of a council of forty local elites (*hào mục*) who served as advisors, was organized in 1886 (Phan 1961, 110–12; Maître 1904, 702). Naturally, this act wouldn't have happened without the intention of impressing and recruiting local elites to serve the colonialists' goal. Thus, ideological elements of Dumoutier's study were grounded on the mixed basis of cooperation and domination.

The Scope of Research

Dumoutier's broad scope of research appeals to readers at the turn of the millennium. As Inspector of Public Education, his writings begin with assessment and restructuring of the methods and policies of the education system. He subsequently approaches other specific fields in turn, including religion, historical monuments,

rituals, language, music, and folk and traditional customs. In chronological order, we can follow the trajectory of his methodological approach on these topics.

Les débuts de renseignement français au Tonkin [The Beginning of French Education in Tonkin] (1887) (**Figure 1**) is the first statement on the new educational program in Vietnam, which would break with the system that had up to then been operational for nearly two thousand years. Through new languages, research techniques, and conceptual approaches, this effort served as a bridge from Vietnam to the wider world. None of this would have been possible without the influence of a thinker like Bert, a graduate of the Sorbonne who was known for his atheistic beliefs in conflict with the norms of French society. As a colonialist, Bert knew how

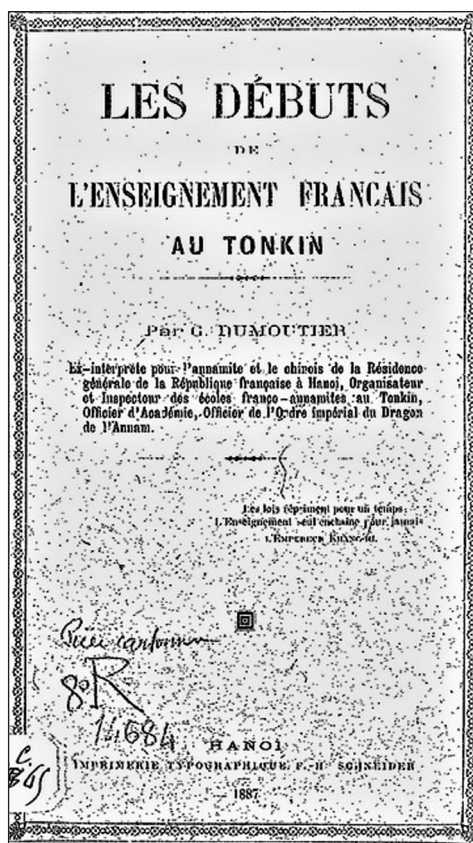


Figure 1: Cover of the book *Le début de l'enseignement français au Tonkin* [The Beginning of the French Education in Tonkin] by G. Dumoutier. Hanoi: F.H. Schneider, 1887.

to deal with the Vietnamese, whom Dumoutier had qualified as *intelligent et doux* (intelligent and subtle). Bert's project was to assemble all parties around "l'école" (schooling, education). This was the most powerful instrument of the conqueror, although both Bert and Dumoutier characterized themselves as relatively ignorant about the Vietnamese and their country. They were only serving as *de guide et d'appui* (guide and assistance) (ibid., 2).

In this study, Dumoutier reported that there were only three French schools founded at the time of Bert's arrival. One year after that, there were nine schools for boys, four schools for girls, one school for painting, one College for Interpreters, and 417 free schools using Latin characters. It was noticeable to Dumoutier that the *quốc ngữ*, or Romanized Vietnamese, was growing in popularity over and above French. He sensed its strength and completeness when he noted that "teaching Vietnamese to five hundred French is easier than teaching French to millions of Vietnamese" (ibid., 11). Indeed, he wrote *Bai Tap Tieng An-Nam – Exercices Pratiques de Langue Annamite* [Lessons of Annamite – Exercises and Practice the Annamite Language] (1889) for this purpose. He recognized the fact of *quốc ngữ*'s growing diffusion and, later, openly admitted without hesitation: "We must study the people among whom we are living, learn their administration, their customs, their language in order to gain their trust; there is no possible pedagogy without that [...]. We should remember that the base of moral influence, mother of command, is in the knowledge, the sentiment of duty, the respect of oneself" (ibid., 14). Based on this theory, Dumoutier focused on a wide range of topics, including the preservation of native cultural markers.

In his first two years in Hanoi, Dumoutier was in charge of the conservation of historical monuments in northern and central Vietnam (Tonkin and Annam). *Les pagodes de Hanoi: Etude d'archéologie et d'épigraphie annamites* [Temples in Hanoi: An Archeological and Epigraphic Study in Annam] (1887) was based on this experience, as was "Le Nam-Giao de Hanoi," a featured article in *Revue d'Ethnographie* (1887, 81–84).

Dumoutier also showed a special interest in the study of native plants, and published a book entitled *Essai sur la pharmacie annamite* [Essay on the Annamite Pharmacy] (1887), which included 300 medicinal plants with names in Vietnamese,

French, Latin, and Chinese. This study indicates therapeutic applications according to Vietnamese and Chinese pharmacology.

It is fascinating to observe how Dumoutier's early experiences in the field of education and monument conservation sharpened his linguistic techniques. He evidently felt a need to understand the Vietnamese language through military usage. In *Manuel militaire Franco-Tonkinois* [Franco-Tonkinese Military Manual] (**Figure 2**), Dumoutier analyzed Vietnamese military terms and phonetics in a manner that may be seen as politically insensitive to some, but was certainly helpful to the colonialists. This text was published by the Hanoi publishing company F.H. Schneider, and in it Dumoutier meticulously explains all necessary phonetics and usage so that the reader can learn in an easy manner. "The Vietnamese language is not a language with stresses (recto-tonic), it's a language that requires, to speak correctly, a certain delicate ear, a natural musical feeling," Dumoutier writes (1888, III).

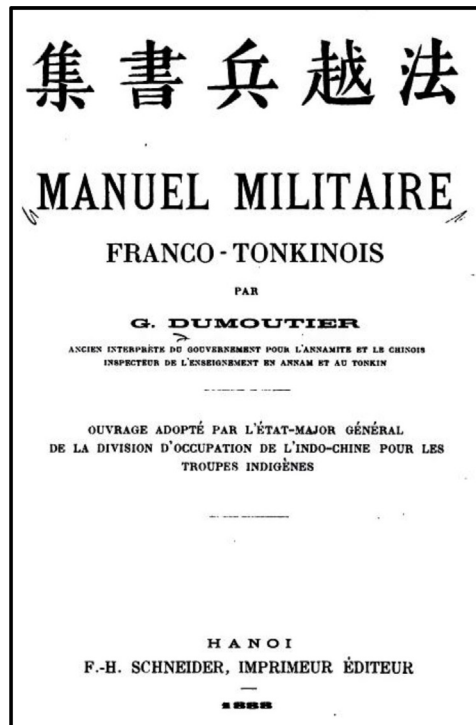


Figure 2: Cover of the book *Manuel militaire Franco-Tonkinois* [Franco-Tonkinese Military Manual] by G. Dumoutier. Hanoi: F.H. Schneider, 1888.

Dumoutier shows himself to be an insightful scholar of language, as he is able to clarify the complexity of terms in four different languages: French, *quốc ngữ*, Chinese, and also *chữ nôm*, the Sino-Vietnamese orthography which combines sound and sight effects for the meanings. Dumoutier's writing, and the eventually encyclopedic output of his research, reached a deeper level—the study of the mind. His works show an enormous amount of observation, description, and analysis, more so, in fact, than any other work to be found in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Vietnam. They offer a richness from which many scholars today can benefit.

Les chants et les traditions populaires des Annamites – Recueillis et traduits [The Songs and the Folk Traditions of the Annamites – Collected and Translated] (**Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6**) was published in Paris by Ernest Leroux Editeur in 1890. Viewed by today's ethnomusicologists as a pioneering work in the field, it is an extensive study in terms of fieldwork experience, social and singing customs, instrumental descriptions, musical notations, and meanings of song texts. In it, forty-one folk songs, a piece of theater, and a number of folk tales and riddles are translated into French for the first time. Notation of instrumental music is also included. This study precedes that of Gaston Knosp (*Etude sur la musique annamite* – A Study of Annamite Music) that took place in Hanoi ten years later. Knosp took a different approach in his investigation of the music and theater in Vietnam, basing his research on a composer's Western musicological analysis (see Mayaud, 2010).

Other studies by Dumoutier identified the contexts of social functions and motivation through traditional customs and spiritual belief, beginning with *Les symboles, les emblèmes et les accessoires du culte chez les Annamites* [The Symbols, Emblems and Accessories of Cult of the Annamites] (1891), and carrying on through *Le rituel funéraire des Annamites: Étude d'ethnographie religieuse* [Funeral Ritual of the Annamites: An Ethnographic Study] (1904) (**Figures 7 and 8**), and *Les cultes annamites* [The Annamite Cults] (1907).

These books all reflect common scenes of Vietnamese society during Dumoutier's time, and one can find in each of them a new mode of ethnography and representation. At a time when photography wasn't at its full application, Dumoutier utilized meticulous drawings by artists whom he knew to be available

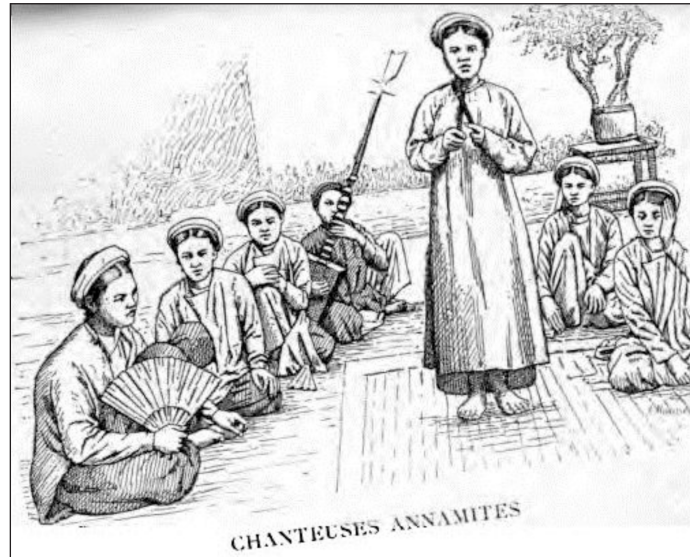


Figure 3: Annamite singers (*Les chants et les traditions populaires des Annamites – Recueillis et traduits* [The Songs and the Folk Traditions of the Annamites – Collected and Translated]. Paris: Ernest Leroix, 1890).

locally. Readers could see how the old society looked as these scenes were vividly represented in his books.

Thanks to innovations like this, Dumoutier took the lead in several directions and clearly became one of the giants of research and publishing during that period of time. Much of his success owed to the growth of publication venues like F.H. Schneider, *Revue d'Ethnographie*, *Musée Guimet*, and, most prominently, *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême Orient*. This final company in particular published works that set the theoretical basis for an intellectual order that represents the first institution of scholars with specialized research on Asia. Founded in Saigon in 1898 under the name *Mission archéologique d'Indochine*, the denomination changed to *Ecole française d'Extrême Orient* in 1900 and moved to Hanoi in 1902 (BEFEO, Tome 1, 67–69). The group gathered the “savants” (elites) in the fields of studies covering not only Indochina but also the area stretching from India to Japan. It soon became one of the most well known institutions in the world. French and Vietnamese writers were instrumental to most of its research projects, and Dumoutier’s article “Etudes sur les Tonkinois” [Studies on the Tonkinese] was featured in the first volume of its journal (BEFEO, Tome 1: 81–98).

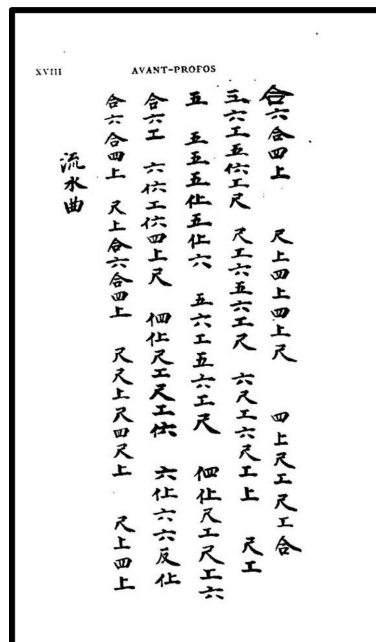


Figure 4: Old notation of Lưu Thủy Khúc (The Stream).

As we have discussed, Dumoutier was a prolific writer and translator, but he is also well known as an educator who advocated for the traditional cultural values of the local people. He excelled in and was a guardian of the scholarship of *chữ Hán* (Chinese) and *chữ nôm* (Sino-Vietnamese), and he promoted the *quốc ngữ* (Romanized character) while training the French. In Dumoutier's view, an interpreter must also be a scholar. The task of education occupied most of his time in those first two years after arriving in Hanoi, when he worked with Résident Général Bert to set up and inspect the new education system.

In his quest to preserve much of the traditional culture, Dumoutier encountered several difficulties with other officials and some Catholic clergy who wanted to convert the entire country of Vietnam into the colonialist system and abolish the old educational heritage. Bert and Dumoutier had to confront colonialist hardliners many times, but they maintained that local languages should not be abolished. The duo strongly defended their position at the International Colonial Conference in Paris. To them, suppression of those languages meant "la suppression de l'enseignement de la morale" [suppression of the moral education] and risked making students

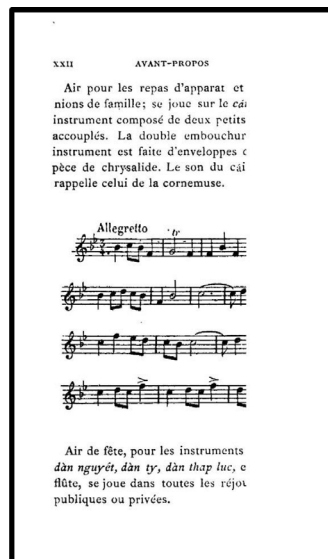


Figure 5: A melody of the *kèn* oboe which Dumoutier said “resembles that of a bagpipe.”

become “étrangers dans leur propre pays” [foreigners right in their own country] (Maître 1906, 793).

As part of his mission to develop respect for the traditional culture and language of Vietnam, Dumoutier explicitly tried to introduce these qualities to his European readership. With scientific experimentation, Dumoutier approached each and every detail of the research targets in a systematic way. Apart from 63 titles listed by himself in *Catalogue des publications de G. Dumoutier* (1900), he contributed to a large number of prestigious journals, including *Revue d'Ethnologie*, *L'Anthropologie*, *Revue de Deux Mondes*, *Bulletin de géographie historique et descriptive*, *Courier de Hai Phong* and others. His research could be categorized into two groups: Historical archeology and geography, and Ethnology and folklore.

Dumoutier's interest in archeology began when he was still studying in France. The young Gustave-Émile wasn't fond of the career his father, an industrial, wanted him to follow. In his twenties, he joined the Mutual Education Society of Coulommiers, a local organization in the neighborhood of Courpalay, and then the Archeological Society of the Seine-et-Marne in Île-de-France Region, where he grew his reputation with early publications like *Découvertes d'archéologie préhistorique: Les Briards avant l'histoire* (Coulommiers, 1877), “Le Swastica et la Roue Solaire dans

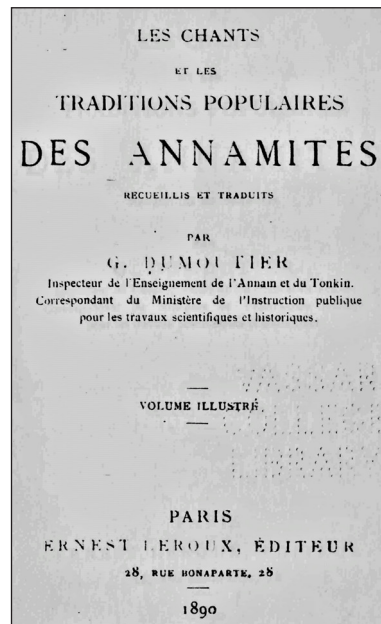


Figure 6: Cover of the book *Les chants et les traditions populaires des Annamites – Recueillis et traduits* [The Songs and the Folk Traditions of the Annamites – Collected and Translated]. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1890.

les symboles et dans les caractères chinois," in *La Revue d'Ethnographie* in 1885, *Les vestiges paléolithiques de Montapeigne et de Beautheil* (Coulommiers, 1878), *Les stations de l'homme préhistorique sur les plateaux du Grand-Morin* (1882), *L'âge du bronze dans les Gaules* (1885), and *Le vexin avant les Vellocase* (1888).

Dumoutier's robustness in the field of historical archeology found a new land of promise in Hanoi. He had then an opportunity to apply his knowledge of the Chinese and Vietnamese to his field expeditions. Scholars of the time appreciated his astounding discoveries and proposed relocations of historical sites (see attached Bibliography). Among his many projects, he relocated the ancient spiral citadel of Cỗ Loa (in 255 BC) as reported in his *Étude historique et archéologique sur Cỗ-Loa, capitale de l'ancien royaume de Âu-Lạc (255–207 BC)* [Historical and Archeological Study on Cỗ-Loa, Capital of the Ancient Kingdom of Âu-Lạc (255–207 BC)]. And, in 1888, he discovered an important Vietnamese portulan in 25 sheets of military land and sea itineraries of King Lê Thánh Tôn's army from Hanoi to the capital of the Cham Kingdom in Phan Rang. For the exceptional finding of this 15th-century



Figure 7: Funeral procession in the street of Hanoi (*Le rituel funéraire des Annamites: Étude d'ethnographie religieuse* [Funeral Ritual of the Annamites: An Ethnographic Study], Hanoi: Imprimerie Typo-Lithographique F.H. Schneider, 1904).

maritime manual, which included coastal points of interest and Vietnam's Pacific Islands, the Geographic Society awarded Dumoutier the Jommard Prize in 1896, in his memory.

Two years after his arrival in Vietnam, Dumoutier turned his attention toward ethnological and folklore research, following his projects on education and historical monuments (1886–1887). His investigations led him into legends, literature, royal annals, Chinese and Sanskrit classics, and subsequent translations. He began to translate and comment on *Lĩnh Nam trích quái liệt truyện* or *Légendes historiques de l'Annam et du Tonkin*, an important book of historical legends, as early as 1887. That was the year when a large number of his works were published and caught the attention of international Asianists. He also showed a keen interest in Vietnamese religions and folk cults. He studied the Buddhist scriptures in Sanskrit and Chinese and the monastic life of Buddhist monks and novices. Dumoutier's scholarship is comprehensive, encompassing such subjects as cults, magic, ceremonies, festivals, rites, temples, shrines, religious objects, divinity, and geomancy. He was a frequent contributor to BEFEO and, leading the colonial delegation from Vietnam to the Exhibition Universelle (World Fair) in Paris in 1889,



Figure 8: Chinese, Sanskrit, Quốc ngữ, and French are used in Dumourtier's research (*Le rituel funéraire des Annamites: Étude d'ethnographie religieuse* [Funeral Ritual of the Annamites: An Ethnographic Study]. Hanoi: Imprimerie Typo-Lithographique F.H. Schneider, 1904).

he brought a group of monks and musicians to perform ritual ceremonies there for the first time.

Conclusion

To arrive at a full understanding of the foundation of modern Vietnamese studies, one must comprehend the complicated process of changes in Vietnamese society over the course of history. The forces of colonialism, of course, affected many countries across the world, but Vietnam's case may best be characterized as one in which tragic confrontation and tolerance came before adoption and adaptation. This process would not have been realized or even undertaken without the spirit of innovation initiated by the movement towards Westernization, when the new educational and scholarly practices were institutionalized. Thus, French should be viewed as a transitional language that helped Vietnam arrive at the threshold of a new global era.

Gustave Dumoutier's contribution to scholarship in Vietnam has proven to be significant and influential; no colleague of his time could be considered his equal. Incontestably, he was a leading scholar who discovered, reconstructed, and re-articulated traditional values in the face of modernity. His landmark research inspired the succeeding generations of scholars, such as Louis Finot, Henri Parmentier, Paul Pelliot, Henri Maspéro, Dr. Gaide, Sylvain Lévy, and Claude Maître to expand their scope of interest. His legacy can be seen in the publication of studies on the Cham monuments in Annam (Central Vietnam), Buddhist movements (India, China, Japan and Vietnam), Indian theater (India), ethnic groups (Laos), Cambodian grammar and Angkor Wat (Cambodia), the Sipsong Panna origins of Tai culture (Southern China), and the Sinology (Japan), to name but a few (BEFEO 1901: No. 1).

Refusing the recommendations of his friends and colleagues to return to his homeland, Dumoutier remained in his adoptive land until his death. After eighteen years of residing in Vietnam, he passed away in his peaceful coastal residence in Đồ Sơn, Tonkin, on August 2, 1904. In his solitude, he brought with him a great treasure of the Vietnamese culture he so loved and admired. An obituary, published in BEFEO in 1904 by Claude Émile Maître, honored Dumoutier with this sincere comment: "Ce savant laborieux, ce fonctionnaire loyal, et ce parfait honnête homme, un autre fin" [This hard-working scholar, this loyal official, and this perfect honest man, another ending]. (Maître 1904, 790–903).

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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