

## 22. PANGOLIN

Long Giao, Long Khanh district, Dong Nai Province,  
3rd century B.C.–2nd century A.D.  
Bronze, H: 7.5 cm × W: 9.5 cm × L: 37.3 cm  
Dong Nai Museum, LG24



FIG. 2

One of the halberds found with the pangolin from Long Giao, Dong Nai Province, Dong Nai Museum.

While the Dong Son culture of northern Viet Nam is known for its sophisticated bronzes, the burials of the Sa Huynh culture of central and southern Viet Nam include simple bronzes with larger numbers of iron goods represented. Although the production of the two regions is quite different, the two areas had contact, as the retrieval of Dong Son bronze drums in the coastal Sa Huynh area shows.

This charming pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*), nineteen halberds (fig. 2), and a single bronze axe found in the same area of Dong Nai Province in southern Viet Nam attest to a sophisticated local production. The halberds appear to relate to those produced in the north (see cat. no. 5), but the pangolin is unique in the production of Viet Nam. A nocturnal animal, sometimes called the scaly anteater, the pangolin is valued in Asian medicine for the magical healing power of its scales. Exports from Southeast Asia have traditionally been forest products, and if today's illegal traffic in pangolins

(an endangered species) indicates past trade, we can surmise its importance.

The artist has depicted this solid cast bronze with an accurately realized small, pointed snout and mouth (which contains an extremely long tongue), a long tail used for balance, and protective, overlapping horny scales. The looped ears are imaginary, as the animal does not have any external ears, though its hearing is quite good.

### LITERATURE

Ba Nghiep Do, *Ban Hoa Khao Co Hoc O Dong Nai 10 The Ky Dau Cong* (Nguyen: Nien han, 1994–1996), 1996.