

56. MALE DIVINITY

Tra Kieu, 7th century

Stone, H: 68cm x W: 70 cm x D: 16 cm

Da Nang Museum of Cham Sculpture, 20.2

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Nguyen Kim Dung, Ian Glover, and Mariko Yamagata, "Excavations at Tra Kieu and Go Cam, Quang Nam Province, Central Viet Nam," in Elisabeth A. Bacus, Ian C. Glover, and Vincent C. Pigott, eds., *Uncovering Southeast Asia's Past: Selected Papers from the 10th International Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists* (Singapore: Nus Press, 2006), 232–44. Also see discussion in Introduction and Reinecke essay in this volume.

Recent excavations at the site of Tra Kieu and its vicinity indicate continuous habitation from the time of the Sa Huynh culture to the Champa period.⁷ Situated on the Thu Bon River, the region was a center of trade from the late first millennium B.C. into modern times. During the Champa period, Tra Kieu appears to have been the primary city in this region.

Extensive sculptural remains have been found at Tra Kieu, though no temples survive today. This relief was found in 1928, but its findspot did not indicate its position on the temple, so we cannot be certain of how it was incorporated into the architecture. *In situ* relief sculpture of approximately this size from extant temples would indicate it was most likely placed in a series of reliefs along the temple's basement. No other examples of reliefs of this style were found at the site, though stone heads with male figures exhibiting the same hairstyle are known.

Its uniqueness lies in its subject matter and its style, which seems to place it quite early, based on the Indian Gupta-

related solidity of the figure and the hair style in a series of ringlets. (See discussion in the previous entry.) The voluptuous foliage that would have extended above the figure's head also indicates an early date. Just who the carving represents is uncertain, though the ferocity of his pose and his wide-open eyes may suggest he is a guardian or *yaksa*.

LITERATURE

Pierre Baptiste and Thierry Zephir, eds., *Trésors d'art du Vietnam: la sculpture du Champa v–xv siècles*, 2005; Jean Boisselier, *La Statuaire du Champa: recherches sur les cultes et l'iconographie*, 1963.