

73. GARUDA WITH NAGA

Thap Mam, Binh Dinh Province, late 12th–13th century

Stone, H: 100 cm × W: 60 cm

National Museum of Vietnamese History, Ha Noi, LSB 21189

Garuda, Vishnu's mount, attained independent status in Southeast Asia and frequently appears as a supporting figure on the exterior of Cham and Khmer temples. The motif of birds supporting the roof of a temple is first seen in Champa on the temples of Hoa Lai. The multiplication of the birds would seem to diminish any identity with Vishnu. The Garuda's body is anthropomorphized, and the overall impression—other than the beak, the talons, and wings—is of the human form.

Snakes and birds being natural enemies, Garuda is often depicted with a snake. Here, he has overcome a three-headed *naga*; holding down the snake's body with his taloned foot, he bites its tail. His left hand grasps another snake, now broken. The decorative feathers and heavy jewels contrast with the smooth surfaces of his flesh. In Cambodia, the

Garuda is depicted in a frontal pose, wings spread, though the remaining Garudas from Thap Mam are shown in three-quarter view like this one, but with wings symmetrically portrayed (though broken here). The *sampot*, in this instance heavily jeweled, recalls the *sampot* of thirteenth-century Khmer style.

LITERATURE

Pham Thuy Hop, *Suu Tap Dieu Khac Cham Pa; Tai Bao Tan Lich Su Ciet Nam (The collection of Champa sculpture in the National Museum of Vietnamese History)*, 2003.