



Fig. 7 Ekamukhalinga found in 2012 in My Son E1 temple. (Photo: Trần Kỳ Phương)

low brick walls, combined with four wooden pillars and a tile roof, it seems reasonable that two round sandstone columns at the site, plus the pediment of the temple, would have been supported by a thick wooden doorframe that has disintegrated. A comparable structure can be found in the wooden blocks used to support the sandstone pediment of temple seven in the Khmer 9th century Prasat Bakong complex. Here two thick rectangular blocks of ironwood still remain supporting the doorjambs of the temple.⁶ Later Cham temple doorframes were usually made of sandstone and many examples can be found in Mỹ Sơn and in other sites such as Chiền Đàn, Dương Long, Hưng Thạnh.

In November 2012, the staff of the Management Board of the Mỹ Sơn Site accidentally uncovered a buried *ekamukhalinga* (*linga* with Śiva's face, Fig. 7) at the northeast outer corner of the Mỹ Sơn E1 temple. Art historians believe the 120cm high *linga* is the one Parmentier first thought must have been erected in the temple (Trần Kỳ Phương, Nguyễn Công Khiết, Lê Văn Minh 2016: 786-90). Two roof tiles carved with carved *kāla* faces were also discovered, adding to the evidence for seeing the temple as roofed with terracotta tiles.

Stern dated Mỹ Sơn E1 to the first half of the 8th century (1942: 69), but Boisselier suggested the mid-7th (1963: 42-5). More recently, art historians have supported Stern (Southworth 2001: 145-49; 2004: 225). Scholars who have analysed the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal with the *vedi* (altar) noted in king Vikrantavarman's inscription of the year of 731/2 CE, have concluded that the two are the same time period (Maxwell 2001: 442; Trần Kỳ Phương 2005: 132-39, note 22; Dhar 2016: 33).

Fig. 8 Mỹ Khánh temple shortly after its discovery. (Photo: Trần Kỳ Phương)



Closed-sanctum temple

The closed-sanctum type of temple appeared when the Cham began to apply the corbel technique. A typical example of this type is the Mỹ Khánh temple, discovered in Huế in 2001. Its position is unique among Cham temples (Fig. 8).

Mỹ Khánh temple, which faces east, was built on a small scale with the walls approximately 270/290 cm high, 150 cm thick and 600 cm long. There are three 'false-door' carved arches with uncompleted human figures standing on lotus flowers. The excavating team from the Vietnam Institute of Archaeology and the Provincial Museum of Thừa Thiên-Huế reported that,

...the excavation of the interior of the tower and the area outside its walls revealed no evidence of collapse.... Thus it is very possible that the Mỹ Khánh tower caved in because it was built on ground that was not solid ... so that construction work on the top of the temple was halted and the structure was only used on a temporary basis. (Trịnh Nam Hải 2001: 80-1)

It has been speculated that the temple was a simple building with a roof of light material such as grass or wood. Evidence supporting this argument is the discovery of a small brick pillar-base (31×19 cm, 18 cm high) at the southwest interior corner of the temple. A base of this size could only have supported a very small wooden or bamboo pillar. Furthermore, in a picture taken just after the discovery of Mỹ Khánh tower in May 2001, one can see very clearly the well-finished surfaces of the very top line of the brick tower walls, showing that the tower was built without a brick roof. The evidence from Mỹ Sơn E1 and Mỹ Khánh suggests that the Cham builders gradually constructed brick temples on a higher and higher scale, evolving from the lower walls of Mỹ Sơn E1 to the higher ones of Mỹ Khánh.⁷ It may be speculated that at that time the roofs were still made of wood or grass.

From the late eighth century onwards, temples were constructed with brick roofs, of various sizes but only on a small scale, applying the corbel technique which made the sanctum of the temple dark. Such corbel roof structures were built throughout the kingdom, for example the Mỹ Sơn C7 temple in the North, and the smallest temple of the Phố Hải/Pajai complex as well as the Po Dam complex in the South of the kingdom represent this phase (Fig. 9). These earliest corbel structures were usually three to