



Left: Fig. 4 Dancing Śiva tympanum Po Klaung Garai. (Courtesy Photographic Archives, Musée national des arts asiatiques-Guimet, Paris)

Far left: Fig. 5 Tháp Mâm style dancing Śiva tympanum Po Klaung Garai (AFAO – Luca Invernizzi, 1996).

century), as well as Mý Sơn H 1 (c. late 12th-early 13th century, a piece preserved in the Mý Sơn Conservancy), among others. As the centuries pass, the scene becomes simplified and the numerous assistants around Śiva progressively disappear. At Po Klaung Garai, they no longer exist ...

The tympanum of Khương Mỹ early in the 10th century shows the mythological episode of the youthful Kṛṣṇa lifting up mount Govardhana to protect the inhabitants of Mathurā from a terrible storm unleashed by Indra (cat. 52). Many other tympana however are not easily identified, especially when they depict a deity whose attributes do not conform to what we know in Indian art or other traditions in Southeast Asia – for example the late 12th-early 13th century Tháp Mâm image traditionally recognised as Brahmā, an identification not really convincing: the sword (*khadga*), the richness of the costume, the third eye visible on the brow of all three visible heads, nor the bird bestridden by the god, which could as well be the *hamṣa* of Brahmā or the peacock of Skanda, allow a definitive interpretation.² As frustrating as they are, such iconographic uncertainties do concern eventually many works of Cham art (cat. 34).

A renewed approach to the pregnant question of what is a 'style' in Cham statuary remains an issue to be worked on in the course of future researches. In the current state of our knowledge, specialists depend essentially on the fundamental study made by Jean Boisselier: *La Statuaire du Champa. Recherches sur les cultes et l'iconographie* (Cham Sculpture. Research on Cults

and Iconography), published long ago in 1963. To be more precise, Boisselier's study considerably amplified the research of Philippe Stern on Cham statuary included, as a kind of appendix, as 'La sculpture chame et son évolution' ('Cham sculpture and its evolution') pp. 73-81, in *L'art du Champa (ancient Annam) et son évolution* (*The art of Champa (ancient Annam) and its evolution*), which appeared in 1942. Since the publication of these two books, few works or articles have specifically attempted to deepen our understanding of styles in Cham statuary...³

Basing his work, as was his habit, on an approach to the evolution of decorative motifs, costume and jewellery, Philippe Stern proposed a chronology of Cham art that completely revised the chronology elaborated by Henri Parmentier in the early 20th century.⁴ It has since been accepted by a great majority of specialists. The problem we face today concerning the chronology of Philippe Stern as well as Jean Boisselier's, which by the way is a little bit more detailed if not clearer, lies in a more regional approach that is developing towards the history of Champa.⁵ In the light of these new historical orientations, Champa is no longer perceived as a unitary kingdom but more as a juxtaposition of polities evolving more or less in agreement with one another. The simultaneous existence of several realms seems to explain the relative difficulties encountered in seeking to assign Cham sculptures to a continuous and coherent stylistic development, comparable with that, for example, known in the art of Angkorian Cambodia. In such a context, the existence of several artistic traditions could not appear more