

logical and would even, in fact, be expected; however, nothing yet truly indicates that distinct schools of art – albeit within a family group – developed in conjunction with the different regions of Champa. In the present state of things, one observes in fact a certain stylistic or aesthetic continuity, from one period to another, across all the territories ruled by Cham kings from the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries to approximately the 15<sup>th</sup> century. One also however notes a certain alternation or succession of the creative centres through time and space – the northern regions losing their pre-eminent role to the southern regions at a given moment, and conversely later on, with each artistic centre in turn taking over the innovations of the others. The clumsy telamon lions of Mỹ Sơn G 1, for example, could not be understood as being in the lineage of their Trà Kiệu equivalents (cat. 30, 31) without having in mind the production of Tháp Mẫm (cat. 75). More sustained research is evidently required into these delicate questions.

For the past 20 or so years, a series of fortuitous discoveries has thrown new light on the art, particularly on the earliest periods. Jean Boisselier attributed only rare works<sup>6</sup> to the period before the first well defined style: that of Mỹ Sơn E 1 of the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries. The discoveries at An Mỹ, Quảng Nam (cat. 1) invite us to 'create' a style under this name, in the tradition of naming styles after a representative place or monument. These sculptures appear to go back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and form, with others that look slightly later (cat. 2, 3), a relatively coherent group. Although it might be interesting, we will not enter here in the delicate discussions stirred up by these puzzling sculptures whose authenticity was questioned soon after their discovery.

The Mỹ Sơn E 1 style and its extensions cover the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries and perhaps enter the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> The regions this covers lie essentially in northern Champa (Quảng Nam, Quảng Trị). The sculpture is very sensitive and alive, with a supple and realistic treatment of faces.

In the traditional series of Cham styles, the 'northern' style of Mỹ Sơn E 1 is succeeded in the 9<sup>th</sup> century by the 'southern' style of Hoà Lai in Ninh Thuận.<sup>8</sup> This Hoà Lai style, contemporary with the extensions of the Mỹ Sơn E 1 style and the beginning of the Đồng Dương style (Quảng Nam late 9<sup>th</sup>-early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries) – between which we hardly observe any break in continuity in the northern regions of Champa – is better defined in architectural décor, but less so, or even

not at all, in sculpture. Boisselier attributed to this style only a few minor and uncharacteristic images. This little represented Hoà Lai style, as far as sculpture is concerned, is a typical example of the conjunction of artistic traditions for which the recent historical studies invite further research.

With the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, there arose one of the strongest and most distinctive styles in all Cham art, centred on the great Mahāyāna monastery of Đồng Dương. The works have an exceptional power of expression, tempered by a refined care for decorative detail (cat. 14-26). The Cham artists here entered the domain of narrative relief carving, which hitherto had more interested their Khmer and Javanese neighbours. The scenes embellishing the two large pedestals of Đồng Dương show a mastery of composition and a vitality just as intense as that of the in-the-round statues discovered in the excavation of the site by Henri Parmentier and Charles Carpeaux in 1902. The Đồng Dương style, began in about 875 CE, the foundation date of the great monastery, and progressively yielded to the high classical style of Mỹ Sơn A 1 in the early years of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Đồng Dương style is decidedly the most Cham of all, or in any case that which one identifies at first glance, so distinctly does it reveal its originality.

It was Philippe Stern who first defined the Mỹ Sơn A 1 style, named after the most beautiful monument at the complex,<sup>9</sup> which was alas pulverised by American bombs in 1969. Jean Boisselier later subdivided this style into two phases and defined a Khương Mỹ style (first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century) still largely dependent on the tendencies in Đồng Dương, and a Trà Kiệu style (second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century), which is much more sober and with a clear propensity to stylization of volumes and lines.<sup>10</sup> Recently, Pierre Baptiste put forth convincing arguments to broaden the time frame of the so-called Trà Kiệu style, considering that it might have begun its development in the last quarter of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and evolved in a continuous way well into the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup> Many works from the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century have a rather formal look, and drive a kind of coldness in the allusive way in which they are modelled (cat. 46). The animal art (cat. 30, 31), and ornamental pieces however, in whose ranks we include the celebrated dancers with scarves (cat. 44, 45), as well as some exceptional in-the-round statues (cat. 42), preserve the inimitable verve of Cham art in its most beautiful realisations. As said earlier,