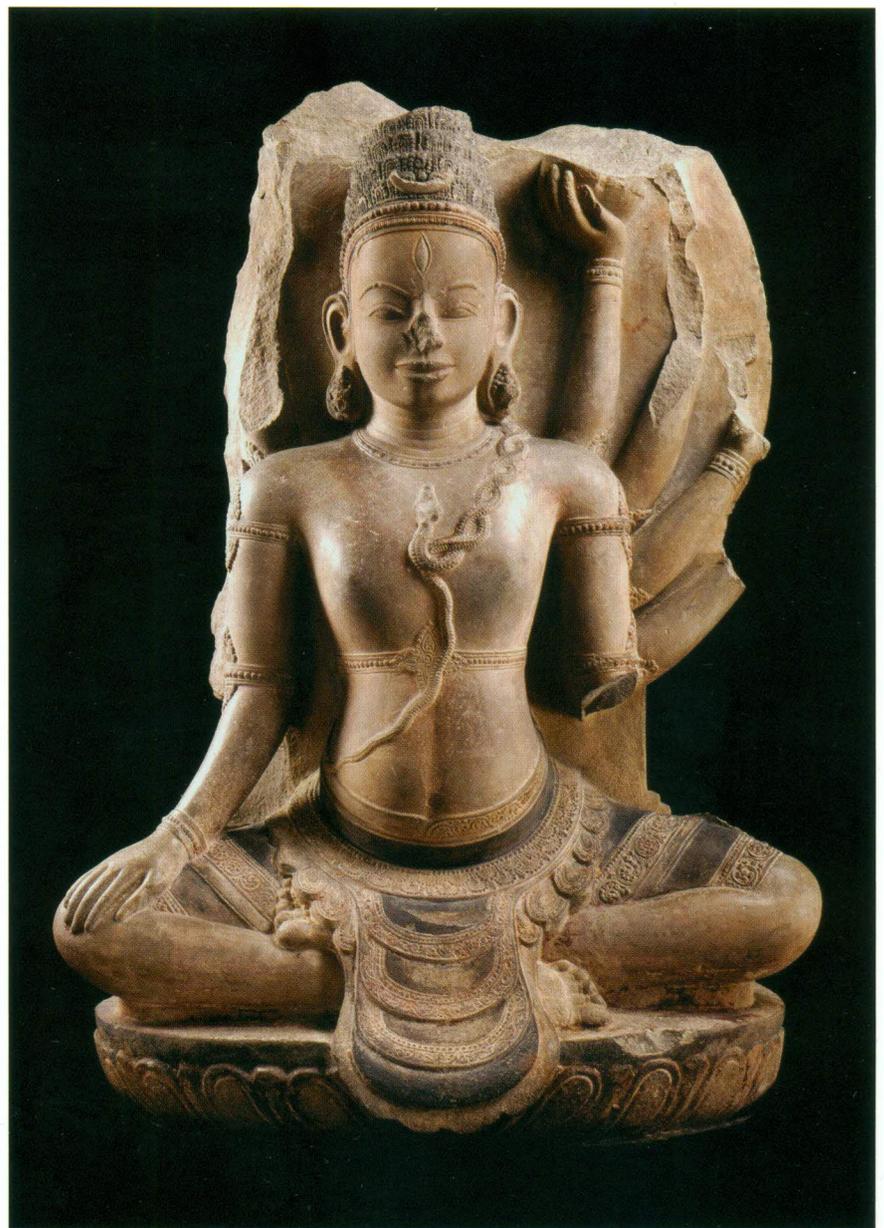


it is in this period that the Cham artists, exposed to numerous external influences – Java, south India –, turned from their in-the-round focus to *almost exclusively high relief cult images*. The change might appear to have little import were it not for the fact that it set Cham statuary on the road towards an art whose ultimate manifestation came in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries in funerary steles called *kut*, simple rounded honorific slabs, sometimes enhanced with shallow reliefs or incisions that vaguely recall jewellery and crowns, and which indicate the rank of the deceased to whom they were consecrated.<sup>12</sup> Yet before this ultimate phase, which must be considered as a kind of artistic recoil, despite its ethnographic and cultural interest, Cham art knew further periods of grandeur.

The late 11<sup>th</sup> century style of Chánh Lộ marks time somewhat after the earlier magnificent realisations. Numerous works and diverse monuments belonging to this transition phase include examples from the eponymous monument in Quảng Ngãi (cat. 66) and from sites spread across the Cham realms from Mỹ Sơn in Quảng Nam (cat. 55), to Nha Trang in Khánh Hoà,<sup>13</sup> in passing via Thủ Thiện and Bình Định.<sup>14</sup>

The magnificent Śiva of the Silver Towers (Tháp Bánh Ít) in the musée Guimet (Fig. 6) is without contest the supreme masterwork of the statuary of this period, and also prefigures the graphic stylisation of the sculptures of the Tháp Mâm style, which appears to have developed from middle to late 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Philippe Stern, after defining a simple style of transition<sup>15</sup> – the style Boisselier identified later as Chánh Lộ<sup>16</sup> – placed a large assemblage of baroque works under the appellation style of Bình Định, a region indeed rich in monuments and representing the last great creative phase of Cham art in both architecture and statuary. The works of this style are spread out over the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and belong for the most part to a period during which a powerful Khmer influence is felt. The historical data on this period are now perhaps less certain than in the past and have also been brought into question. Contrary to what Jean Boisselier proposed in his study of the style of Tháp Mâm (the style Philippe Stern called the style of Bình Định),<sup>17</sup> a great number of statues representing animals (cat. 78), as well as several dancers (cat. 82, 83) seem to us to be better understood in the light and in the lineage of Khmer statuary of the Bayon style (late 12<sup>th</sup>-



early 13<sup>th</sup> century) than being a model for some aspects of the sculptural art in the reign of the Khmer king Jayavarman VII (1182/3-c.1218). The issue awaits greater exploration, alongside the apparently strong imprint of Sino-Vietnamese iconography and decorative art on the sculptures of the Tháp Mâm style.<sup>18</sup> This period remains without doubt the one that leaves most questions unresolved in the present state of research.

The last Cham creations, studied by Philippe Stern in his late style (14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries), were classified by Jean Boisselier in two successive styles covering the same period: Yang Mum (cat. 91, 92) and Po Rome. Few in number, these sculptures from the twilight of Cham art have a beautiful presence, while showing less virtuosity than their immediate predecessors.

**Fig. 6** 11<sup>th</sup> century Tháp Bánh Ít ('silver towers') in the Musée Guimet (MG 18130). (Courtesy Photographic Archives, Musée national des arts asiatiques-Guimet, Paris)