

- 1 At the tower number 8 at the 9<sup>th</sup> century Prasat Bakong complex, Cambodian conservators found two large blocks of worn ironwood attached to sandstone doorjamb. This reliable evidence about the combination of wood and stone in a religious architecture in the region was noted by the author at Prasat Bakong in November 2016. Recently, I saw that a combination of wood and stone have been applied by French restorers to the southern *mandapa* of the Wat Phu complex.
- 2 There are three extant tympana depicting the theme of Viṣṇu Anantaśāyin, the birth of the creator Brahmā, in Cham sculpture until today. The first is the Mỹ Sơn E1 tympanum; the second was found at Phú Thọ site; and the third was found at Mỹ Xuyên site. Phú Thọ is located on a low hill next to Cổ Lũy citadel on the southern bank of the Sa Kỳ estuary in Quảng Ngãi province, about 100 km south of Mỹ Sơn; the Phú Thọ tympanum is on display at the Cham Museum in Đà Nẵng (AFAO-EFEO 1997: 98).

This tympanum was found at Mỹ Sơn E1 temple, a tiled roof temple with low brick wall and a large *yoni-linga* set in the sanctum of the temple (Parmentier 1909: 401-2, Pl. CXX; Dhar 2016: 33-5; Trần Kỳ Phương, *in this volume*). The tympanum was placed at the entrance to the temple and was supported by two *in situ* round sandstone colonnettes with garlands decorating the capitals. The tympanum was built into an arch and, together with its ornamental pattern, established for art historians the basic features for classifying the earliest style of Cham art (Stern 1942: 13-4). The decoration of the two sandstone colonnettes is similar to that of the round pillars on the Mỹ Sơn E1 pedestal as well as pre-Angkorian colonnettes found in Cambodia (Bénisti 1969: fig. 20, 29), in northeast Thailand (Lorrillard 2014: fig. 20) and in Champasak, southern Laos (now on display at Wat Phu Site Museum).

Because of the temple's low brick wall 2.50 meters high, the tympanum and the two round colonnettes of Mỹ Sơn E1 were probably fitted with ironwood doorjamb. There are still two tenons for fitting into wooden doorjamb on both ends of the tympanum. The Mỹ Sơn E1 wooden doorjamb no longer exist, but the technique of combining wood and stone can be recognized here, as at other religious architectural sites in Southeast Asia that still have vestiges of wood.<sup>1</sup>

The theme of Viṣṇu Anantaśāyin and the birth of Brahmā was popular in rectangular tympana in Cham and Khmer art during the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>2</sup> There seems to have been

a corridor for artistic as well as commercial exchange along a road linking northeast Cambodia and Champa, where there are important *Śaiva* monuments in Thalaborivat, Stung Treng province and Mỹ Sơn, Quảng Nam province (Trần Kỳ Phương *et al.* 2015).

The bas-reliefs of a two-armed Viṣṇu Anantaśāyin in Cham sculpture, differ from those in Khmer art (e.g. the Tuol Baset tympanum) with four arms (Boisselier 1963: 40-2). According to the *Vaikhānasa-gama-sūtra*, there are four ways of showing Viṣṇu Anantaśāyin in the *yogāsana* posture with only two hands (Soundra 1987: 68). On the Cham relief there is a sage (*rṣi*) who is said to be Bhṛgu, of the *Āgama* ritual texts, with a long beard sitting at Viṣṇu's feet, raising his hands in veneration (Baptiste and Zéphir 2005: 185, cat. 5). Viṣṇu lying on a seven-headed snake Ananta, wearing a *kirīṭamukuta* and a long *dhoti*, occurs in Cham sculpture from the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. He rests his head on one hand and holds a lotus stalk in the other as in Khmer art, except that Viṣṇu on the Cham relief only has two hands.

At each end of the bas-relief there are two half human Garuḍas, Viṣṇu's mount. Garuḍa holding two snakes appears in sculptures from the pre-Angkor and Dvāravatī periods (Bénisti 1974: 150, fig. 16, 17; Guy 2015: 153, cat. 77; *Dvāravatī Art* 2009: 131, cat. 10); one of the earliest sculptures of this type, from the early 8<sup>th</sup> century, was found in Vat Fang Deng in Seisetha town, Attapue province, southern Laos (Lorrillard 2014: 209, fig. 13; Trần Kỳ Phương

**Fig. 2** Round colonnette of Mỹ Sơn E1 temple in situ. (Trần Kỳ Phương)

