

30, 31. Cornerpieces: rearing and rampant lions

Trà Kiệu, Quảng Nam

10th century

Sandstone: H. 76 cm;

W. 50 cm; D. 47 cm.

H. 73 cm; W. 30 cm;

D. 35 cm

BTC 114-36.5;

BTC 101 36.29



The first little rearing lion seated on its rear paws and raised up as if about to attack much resembles the telamon lions at the angles of the great Trà Kiệu narrative pedestal (cat. 29). The front limbs are distinguished though by being less stretched upwards and backwards than a true atlante; the paw cushions thus face forward instead of upwards. With several other sculptures of the same type, this piece turned the corners of the brick foundation wall of the terrace common to the principal sanctuaries of Trà Kiệu, according to the descriptions of Jean-Yves Claeys¹: ‘... this corner [northwest] is marked by a cornerpiece which has disappeared but has clearly left its

socket. This stone still exists *in situ* at the northeast corner’, ‘Lion in position of attack found at the N-E corner of the foundation.’

The anatomy of the animal is simplified and unreal. It tends towards the human in the front paws, which resemble arms with chubby, clawed hands. The fur is indicated at the elbows of the front and rear limbs by small, twisted locks of hair that mark the articulation. The mane, carved like an ornamental pad covers the breast more naturally, but remains decorative behind the head. The grimacing mask of this lion, with its lips drawn back and its large bulging eyes emphasized by the eyebrows resolve into little horns on the