

## 69. Uroja Offerings altar (*bali-pīṭha*)

Sơn Triều, Bình Định

12<sup>th</sup> century

Sandstone: H: 25 cm;

Diameter: 71 cm.

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**U**roja means 'breast' in Sanskrit and Old Cham and is the name of a goddess respected in the ancestry of Cham royalty (Boisselier 1963: 90, 174). She was celebrated as 'the grace of mother earth' in a significant indigenous cult (Golzio 2004: 71, 160). Although the name of Uroja first appeared in the inscriptions of King Indravarman (875 CE) in Đồng Dương *vihāra* (Golzio 2004: 60-73), this striking architectural decoration did not appear there.

This Uroja offerings altar (*bali-pīṭha*) found in Sơn Triều, Bình Định is carved with 29 'breasts', each 7 cm in diameter, of an open lotus flower surrounded by an encircling 'breast motif' band. The top is decorated a large, open, eight-petalled lotus that are rarely seen in this way in Cham sculptural art. Ritual offerings would probably have been made of flowers, fruit, rice-balls for the gods of the temple during the ceremony of opening the temple door.

TKP

