

71. Inscribed pedestal with breast motif supporting *dvārapāla*

Tháp Mâm, Bình Định
13th century
Sandstone: H. 57 cm;
circumference 296cm
BTC 433

Inscription C.184 on the band below the feet is fragmentary and defines a donation of land. (Griffiths et al 2012:257-8)



Fig. 1 Pot ornamented with 'breast' motif unearthed during the archaeological excavation at Hòa Diêm site in 2007. Housed at Khánh Hòa Provincial Museum, Nha Trang, Khánh Hòa province, Vietnam [Hòa Diêm, acc.no. H1-M10, 2007]. (Courtesy by Mariko Yamagata)



The motif became popular in the 12th and 13th centuries on the decorative programs of Cham temples built during the reign of Jaya Harivarman (c. 1157/58 CE) when the Uroja goddess was especially glorified in inscriptions (Golzio 2014: 153-61 [C.100]). Contemporaneously, the motif ornamented the sandstone sculptural works in the Mỹ Sơn and Vijaya regions (Boisselier 1963; Southworth & Trần Kỳ Phương 2018). In temple-architecture

the motif is widely carved on the cornice and base of the temples such the Dương Long temple group built in the 12th-13th centuries.

Historically, a decorative 'breast motif' appeared in indigenous proto-historical cultures dating back to the second and the third centuries CE on pottery found in Sa Huỳnh culture sites at Hòa Diêm (Khánh Hòa province) in 2007.¹ (Fig. 1) Similar motifs appear as the main ornament of wooden houses of Austronesian ethnic groups such as Ede and Jorai people who today live in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.² (Fig. 2). These ethnic groups were earlier considered as a part of the *urān Campā* or Cham people. (Trần Kỳ Phương 2006). 'Breast motif' symbolizing fertility are carved widely on the wooden houses of the Austronesian world (Waterson 1991: 120-1).

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- 1 The date is based on Yamagata's expertise. Other prehistoric pottery featuring similar breasts-like motifs on display at the National Museum of Manila and the National Museum of Bangkok.
- 2 The anthropologist Jacques Dournes, an expert on the Jorai culture suggested that 'breast motif' was rooted from indigenous culture as he mentioned, 'Dans leur pays aux femmes se bien faites les Jorai n'avaient aucun besoin de s'inspirer des Căm; le motif en seins de la sculpture căm pourrait être simplement un produit de la culture de base, pré-hindouisée.' (Dournes 1971: 354-8)



Fig. 2 The decorative motif of 'breasts' carved on a wooden ladder of an Ede ethnic house displayed at the Vietnam Ethnology Museum in Hanoi. (Trần Kỳ Phương)

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