

78. Flying lion

Tháp Mâm, Bình Định

12th-13th centuries

Sandstone: H. 133 cm;

W. 61 cm ; D. 52 cm

BTC 237-36.100



In a posture as acrobatic as the dragon-*makara*, this flying lion with its strange and single rear paw raised above his body, was part of the foundation wall of the Tháp Mâm tower-sanctuary, which must have formed a terrace of great size. The sculpture is integrated into a series of mouldings visible behind the animal. These mouldings are of the same shape and size as the ones present on many decorative blocks found during the excavations. This flying lion was most probably placed by a staircase (one of several) giving access to the terrace on which the temple

stood. The extraordinarily expressive face of this lion characterises the Tháp Mâm treatment of stone. Above the bulging eyes of the animal rise registers of superimposed arcs and his mouth has a border of twisted hair meshes. The mane, set with the comma shapes this art style is renowned for, resembles a diadem and falls in a curve onto the shoulders.

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