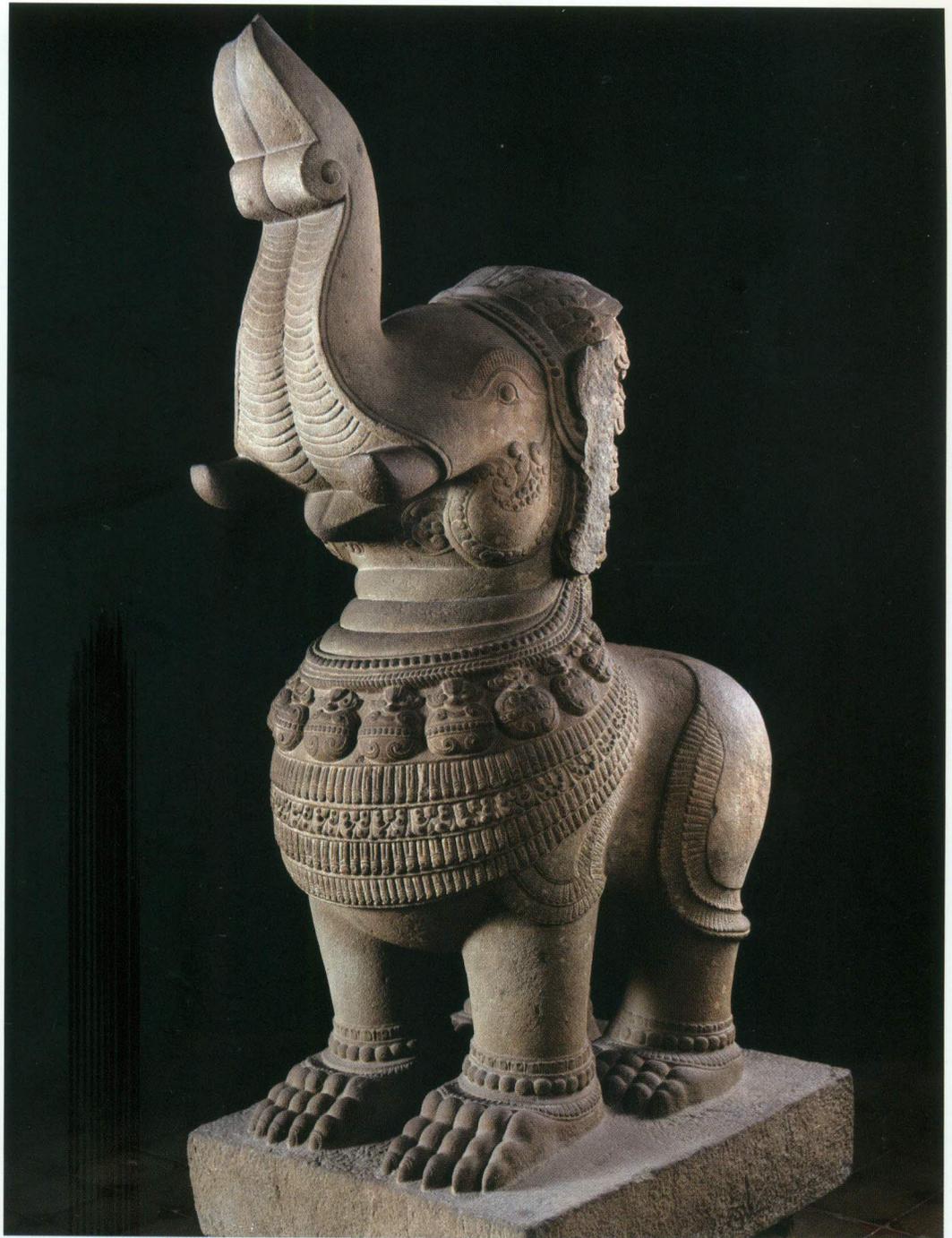


## 79. Elephant-lion (*gajasimha*)

Tháp Mãm, Bình Định  
12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries  
Sandstone: H. 214 cm;  
W. 85 cm; D. 103cm  
BTC 221-38.7



Among the numerous accidents that have led to rich archaeological discoveries in the world, figures the tip of the trunk of this impressive *gajasimha* to which we owe the uncovering of the trove of sculptures of the sanctuary of Tháp Mãm – the ‘tower of M. Mãm’ – which an erroneous tradition, according to our Vietnamese colleagues, long designated under the name ‘crumbled tower’. In fact, Jean-Yves Claeys, who directed the excavation of this rich site in 1934, reports<sup>1</sup> that the sculpture was brought to the attention of M. Jardin, Resident of France at Quy Nhơn, in October 1933, some

300 m. north of the former Cham citadel of Chà Bàn, the site of the ancient city of Vijaya in Bình Định. The farmer who found the sculpture wanted to move a rural boundary marker – the tip of the trunk of the animal that was sticking out of the ground. After digging around it he perceived ‘that the piece went into the ground and was part of an enormous buried carved stone animal.’<sup>2</sup> Numerous other exceptional works would soon be uncovered. In truth, the site had been known for a long time. Henri Parmentier mentioned it in 1909 in presenting the sculptures deposited in the garden of the nearby Tháp Mãm pagoda: ‘If one

1 Claeys 1934 (2).

2 This citation is drawn from an unedited text by Henri Parmentier in the archives of the EFEO.