

SURVEY OF THE SOUTHERN PROVINCES OF CAMBODIA  
IN THE PRE-ANGKOR PERIOD

Thesis submitted for the degree of  
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June 1976



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ABSTRACT

Recent archaeological excavations in various parts of South East Asia have brought abundant, fresh material to scholars. Consequently, new ideas and hypotheses have been put forward by those who work in this particular field of studies. In Cambodia, prior to the recent tragic events, a number of new sites have been discovered. Fresh evidence has come to light and eventually led scholars to reconsider some views hitherto accepted as established.

The present "Survey of the Southern Provinces of Cambodia in the pre-Angkor period" aims to be a re-examination of the archaeological and some epigraphical material available in the hope of seeing whether it is possible as yet to establish any relation between the numerous sites and to provide a preliminary sketch of the culture of the area.

The scope of the present work is limited geographically to certain southern provinces of present day Cambodia, namely Kandal, Kampong Speu, Takeo, Kampot and Prey Veng; it also includes the deltaic area of South Vietnam from which only some of the most important sites will be considered. Chronologically, the period involved is that commonly known as Funan and pre-Angkor periods, which run roughly from the 1st to the 8th century A.D.

The work consists of a study of various archaeological remains and other sculptures so far found on, or near the sites. Attempts will be made to date them

more closely in the light of recent research. Inscriptions found in the vicinity of the area will be examined in order to try to relate them to the other data.

While examining epigraphic documents efforts will be made to see whether there are any possible connections between place names mentioned in the inscriptions and those of the present day. This kind of historical geography is mainly concerned with names involving topographical features such as water tanks, lakes, hills, mounds, forests which still persist abundantly in many parts of Cambodia, particularly in the province of Takeo.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with great appreciation and respect that I wish to thank Mrs J.M. Jacob for her kind assistance. Her encouragement and understanding have been a great help in the undertaking of this study.

I am grateful to Dr S. Pou who has kindly allowed me to use some of her large scale maps of Cambodia, without which the writing of part of this work would have been impossible. I owe her gratitude and respect.

My thanks are also due to Professor E.H.S. Simmonds and Professore H.L. Shorto for their sympathy towards me.

To my tutor, Mr A.H. Christie, more than any other, I express my sincere and profound gratitude and respect for without his supervision, invaluable encouragement and his extreme understanding, this work could never have been done.

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CHAPTER 1GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND (Fig. 1)

Present day Cambodia lies in the south west part of the Indochinese peninsula. Its boundaries are limited in the west and the north by Thailand and Laos. The eastern limit is the area formerly known as South Vietnam. In the south is located the coastal strip which is separated from the rest of the country by heavily forested mountain ranges.<sup>1</sup>

The area to be examined in the present survey is confined to the southern part of the country, that is the provinces of Kandal, Kampong Speu, Takeo and Kampot.

The dominant feature of the country is the Mekong river known locally as the Tonle Thom, "the big river", which has its source in the high Tibetan mountains of southern China. South of Phnom-Penh the Mekong splits into two branches; the eastern branch continues to be called the Mekong/Tonle Thom whereas the western branch is called the Bassac/Tonle Toch, "the small river". The two branches are fed by a number of tributaries and flow through the Mekong delta into the South China sea. Another important feature associated with the Mekong is a huge natural reservoir, the Tonle Sap, "the fresh water ocean",<sup>2</sup> commonly known as the Great Lake since it is the largest sheet of water in southeast Asia.

The principal feature of the southern part of Cambodia is Phnom Kravanh, "the Cardamom range", the eastern part of which is called Phnom Damrei, "the

Elephant range"; this runs south-south-east of the Cardamom range. Phnom Damrei has foothills to the north and to the east and looks down upon the Gulf of Siam. Along the rugged coast lies a low, flat and swampy strip. Despite a detailed geographical study of Cambodia<sup>3</sup> this range is still little known topographically. The culminating point of the range, according to Delvert,<sup>4</sup> is Phnom Aural (1813 m.) in the north-east. Among other summits are Phnom Sangker (1744 m.), Phnom Tumpor (1563 m.) in the north west and Phnom Srang (728 m.) and Phnom Preah (780 m.) in the east of the range. Phnom Kravanh and in general the mountains of south-western Cambodia are hard to explore. The major part of the massif, and particularly the southern area is the domain of dense forests with abundant rainfall.

The principal coastal towns are Kampong Som, Kampot and Kampong Trach.

Kampong Som, the most westerly town, lies in the basin of a river of the same name which has its source in the southern part of a massif in the province of Posat and flows into the Gulf of Siam at Kampong Som bay. The country is very rough and heavily forested with hills of low altitude in the south and real mountains in the north. Between Kampong Som and the next town, Kampot, lies the plain of Veal Rinh. This area is the territory of an aboriginal tribe, the Saoch, one of many proto-Indochinese tribes still inhabiting Cambodia.

The plains of Kampot and Veal Rinh form the

province of Kampot.<sup>5</sup> It is crossed by a main river originating from Phnom Popok Vil in the Phnom Damrei range, the stung Kampot. In this area archaeological remains have been discovered, attesting to the occupation of the territory from a period as early as the 6th century A.D. This is on the evidence of an inscription written in Old Khmer, found at Phnom Ngok, a limestone hill to the east of Kampot.

Further east is the district of Peam, "the confluence", with Kampong Trach as its chief town which covers a swampy area between Kampot and Hatien. In the hinterland are scattered sandstone and limestone hills. The region is crossed by the Prek Peam (sometimes referred to as Hatien river), which has its source about 30 kilometers north from the sea. Prek Peam is the union of two small waterways; the main one, separating Kampot and Peam from the district of Banteay Meas in the north, is called Prek Tuk Meas from the name of an important village of the same name, Phum Tuk Meas, "the village of the Golden Boat", close to the massif called Phnom Totung; the other branch of Prek Peam passes through the village of Prei Angkonh, not far from that of Tuk Meas, and separates the district of Treang from that of Banteay Meas, "the Golden citadel".<sup>6</sup> In the northern part of Peam district a number of archaeological remains testify to the importance of this area in the past. Some of these remains will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

The former district of Treang now forms the

province of Takeo. It is bordered in the south-west by the Prek Peam and its tributary and by another river, the Stung Slaku in the north. Treang is mainly covered with light forest and frequent wooded hills which increase in number in the southern part of the province. It is divided into two distinct regions by a large depression. In the north is the domain of plains which are temporarily flooded while the south is a region of hills and mountains. To adopt Aymonier's description,<sup>7</sup> these can be divided into two groups; a series of isolated peaks running north-south separating the Mekong river basin and that of the Prek Peam; and a more compact and more important group running west-east, perpendicular to the first group, surrounded by a forest belt. Among the remains from the past found in this area are those of Preah Bat Chean Chum and Phnom Bayang, at the eastern end of a massif of the same name.

To the north of Treang is the district of Prei Krabas which is separated from the previous one by the Stung Slaku. The other important waterway of Prei Krabas is Stung Angkor Borei. It is in this area that most of the pre-Angkorian remains of present southern Cambodia have been found. The area is so rich that despite the explorations of previous workers, namely Aymonier, De Lajonquière and Dalet, more archaeological material is still being discovered. Prei Krabas, "the forest of cotton trees" is well attested in Khmer epigraphy. An attempt will be made to identify some place names of this district with those mentioned in ancient

inscriptions found in the area.

South of Phnom-Penh and north of Prei Krabas, there used to be an important territory comprising, in the west the present districts of Phnom Sruoch and Kong Pisei in the province of Kampong Speu; Kandal Stung in the north and Saang in the east. This was the territory of Bati.<sup>8</sup> Between the two main waterways of Bati, the Stung Slaku and the Prek Toch, is an area dotted with granitic and sandstone peaks some 200 to 300 meters high. Some of these still preserve remains of ancient temples, for example Phnom Thma Dos and Phnom Ta Mao and the well known Phnom Chiso.

In the northern part of this region is a big lake, Tonle Bati. On the southern bank of this vast reservoir are the ruins of an important temple, Prasat Ta Prohm. The area includes several lakes which are connected by the Prek Toch river.

South of this area is another district, Saang, which did not yield much archaeological material during the earlier explorations. The name Saang is drawn from a granitic hill, Phnom Saang, about 40 meters high, which suddenly emerges from the surrounding partly flooded plain. Recent surveys have revealed more evidence attesting to the antiquity of this area. A few kilometers south of Phnom Saang is another hill, Phnom Thon Mon, about 20 meters high, where remains dating to the 8th century A.D. have recently been found.

West of Phnom-Penh is the district of Kandal Stung, an area between Prek Thnot in the north, and Prek

Toch in the south, hence the name which means "between the rivers". The prominent feature of this area is the abundance of sugar palm trees which cover the major part of the region, particularly along the Prek Thnot river which must have taken its name from this natural feature since it means "the river of sugar palm trees". Along Stung Prek Thnot are found remains dating back to the 7th century A.D.

Further west of Kandal Stung district is Kong Pisei, an area similar to the neighbouring districts of Bati and Kandal Stung. A few hills emerge from the surrounding plains, one of them, Phnom Ho Phneou, contains ancient remains going back to the 7th century A.D. Other peaks, such as Phnom Sruoch, Phnom Ta Mok, Phnom Srang, still await more thorough explorations.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. Among the works consulted in writing this chapter are Aymonier's Géographie du Cambodge, Paris 1876 and his classic Le Cambodge, I (1900). More recent regional studies of Cambodia have been undertaken. For example, Jean Fontanel, Ratanakiri. Etude du milieu naturel d'une région frontrière du Cambodge, Doctoral thesis, 1967, University of Grenoble; Raymond Blanadet, Pailin, pays des pierres précieuses, Doctoral thesis, 1968, Sorbonne. A review of both works along with other recent geographical studies of Cambodia can be found in BEFEO, LXII, 1975, pp. 523-27. Two articles by Blanadet (mainly extracted from his 1968 thesis) are published in Cahiers d'Outre-Mer: "Pailin: une région du Cambodge en voie de mutation", 92, Oct. - Dec. 1970, pp. 353-78; and "Andoek Hep, ou le destin d'un front pionnier du Cambodge", 94, Apr. - June 1971, pp. 185-208.
2. This is the opinion of Mrs Saveros Lewitz in her doctoral thesis, La toponymie khmère, Paris, 1966, published in BEFEO, LIII, who translates it as "vaste étendue d'eau douce", explaining tonle according to the old meaning of the word, "sea, ocean", a meaning which is still preserved in Thai.
3. Jean Delvert, Le Paysan cambodgien, Paris, 1961.
4. Op.cit., p. 17.
5. For a more detailed study of this area, see Roland Pourtier, Les régions littorales du Cambodge, Doctoral thesis, 1969, Sorbonne, and his article "Les Chinois du Cambodge littoral", in Cahiers d'Outre-Mer, 93, Jan. - Mar. 1971, pp. 45-72, which deal mainly with the human and economic aspects of the region but provide a good description of the area.
6. Aymonier, Le Cambodge, I, p. 155.
7. Op.cit., p. 160.
8. Aymonier thinks that this name means "sacred place" but also adds that the etymology is uncertain. Op.cit., p. 171.

CHAPTER 2  
HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

One particular chapter of the history of the area occupied by present day Cambodia has been referred to by various scholars under different denominations namely the ~~Indo~~, Indo-Khmer, pre-Khmer or pre-Angkor period. It is this last term which has generally been retained and used when referring to the history of Cambodia up to the end of the 8th century A.D.

This period has been regarded as falling into two parts known respectively as the Funan and Chenla periods; the former is generally believed to be from the 1st to the 6th century and the latter from the 6th to the 8th. Both Funan and Chenla are the names Chinese annalists have used to refer to these two principalities which have been located in the southern part of the Indochinese peninsula. Recently another division of this phase of the history of Cambodia, based on new discoveries and seeming to fit the facts more closely, has been proposed by one of the leading scholars on South East Asia. Under this new scheme<sup>1</sup> Cambodian history is divided into three major periods:

1. The prehistoric and protohistoric period, extending till the 1st century A.D. during which the future Cambodia had not yet been under Indian influence and Chinese suzerainty.

2. The Funanese period or first historic period, starting with the appearance of the first evidence of Indian influence on Funan and ending with the reign of

Kaundinya Jayavarman (ca. 478-574 A.D.). The kingdom seems to have dominated a large part of the peninsula. Archaeological finds recovered in the delta area of the Mekong river attest to the existence of relationships with the Western world and China.

3. The pre-Angkor period, from the reign of Kaundinya-Jayavarman to the reign of Jayavarman II (802-850 A.D.), founder of the Angkor Kingdom. Three successive phases may be distinguished in this period: in the first, from the 3rd quarter of the 5th century to the middle of the 6th century, Funan still preserves its power and the first inscriptions, mostly in Sanskrit, and the first statues begin to appear; during the second phase (end of the 6th to the end of the 7th century A.D.), Chenla, a northern vassal kingdom of Funan, becomes the master of the area; the third phase sees the split of Chenla into Land Chenla and Water Chenla.

Although the present work is specifically concerned with the pre-Angkor period, it would not be out of place to include in this historical sketch, a brief survey of the first period, that is of the prehistoric and proto-historic period, which in any case still awaits further investigation.

Recent progress in the field of South East Asian prehistory has supplied scholars with fresh material and data which tend to contradict a previously-held theory. Professor W.G. Solheim II has put forward a new theory<sup>2</sup> in which he states that "South East Asians are innovators, contributing much to world culture and in particular

contributing to the foundation of North Chinese culture and its later expansion." This differs from the old theory which sees "South East Asia as a cul de sac with innovations and progress coming from the outside and in particular owing much of its progress to migrations from North China in particular". Together with this new theory, Solheim also suggests a new framework for South East Asian prehistory in which 5 stages may be distinguished.<sup>3</sup>

1. Lithic stage (up to around 40,000 B.C.), roughly equivalent to the early and middle palaeolithic of Europe. This refers to the early use of chipped and flaked stone tools.

2. Lignic stage (about 40,000 B.C. to 20,000 B.C.) in which tools made of wood, particularly bamboo became more important than those made of stone. This would include the early Hoabinhian phase.

3. Crystallitic phase (20,000 B.C. to around 8,000 B.C.), during which began the "crystallization" of various cultures in South East Asia. The middle and late Hoabinhian phases would be included in this period. Solheim also suggests that it was during this period that the technique of shaping stone tools by grinding and polishing was first developed and that this appeared in South East Asia much earlier than in the Middle East during the Neolithic stage (around 8,000 B.C.). He believes that plants were domesticated also during this period.

4. Existensionistic phase, beginning around 8,000 B.C. and ending at the opening of the Christian era,

during which mountain people spread out into the rest of South East Asia. The importance of plant and animal domestication would have gradually been increased.

5. Period of conflicting Empires during which appear the first centralised states in the beginning of the Christian era, due mainly to political and religious influences from India. These various states were to develop and flourish till the 16th century A.D., after which European colonisation took over, thus ending the classical age of South East Asia.

Cambodian prehistory and protohistory do not seem to differ much from that of the rest of the peninsula in their outline. In the last quarter of the 19th century prehistoric research began in Cambodia with the discovery of Samrong Sen in the present province of Kampong Chhnang, after which there were few developments until Paul Levy's work in 1938 at Mlu Prei.<sup>4</sup> This research has since progressed, particularly during the last decade, thanks to the labour of European and American prehistorians.

In 1959 Louis Malleret discovered circular earthworks in the red soils in the region of Snuol, in the north east of Cambodia.<sup>5</sup> In 1962, at Mimot in the province of Kampong Cham, excavations had been carried out by Bernard Philippe Groslier in one of the "forts" or "fortified villages". He proposed the term "Mimotian" to describe this culture.<sup>6</sup> In 1963 a pebble culture was discovered by Edmond Saurin in eastern Cambodia,<sup>7</sup> on a terrace 40 metres high above the Mekong river. This

industry mainly consists of worked quartzite pebble and silicified wood shaped into different tools. It seems that the Hoabinhian and Bacsonian pebble-culture derived directly from this eastern Cambodian one.<sup>8</sup>

The neolithic phase is represented in Cambodia by well known sites such as Samrong Sen, Anlong Phdao and sites in the whole area of Mlu Prei. Samrong Sen, in the central part of Cambodia, on the bank of the Chinit river, is one of the richest and most clearly defined neolithic settlements in Indo-China. The bulk of the implements were made of phtanite; sandstone and diorite were also used but the majority of the implements consist of carefully polished axes, adzes, chisels and hoe blades. "It would seem that stone arrowheads were replaced there not only by bamboo but bone ... Pottery was made without the potter's wheel, but very skilfully."<sup>9</sup>

In 1965, in the karstic formation of the Treang region in the south-west of the province of Battambang, research was carried out and led to the discovery of a cave, Laang Spean, the first of its kind to be found in Cambodia.<sup>10</sup> Excavations have yielded large tools of the Hoabinhian type with an assemblage of flake and pottery. Radio-carbon dates show a lifetime span from 4290 B.C. to A.D. 830, thus proving a continuity of occupation for about five thousand years. Laang Spean is interesting in two ways: first, it shows a neolithic tradition without polished stone tools; second, the ceramics are certified as being from the 5th millenium B.C. as is also the flaked stone assemblage.<sup>11</sup>

In the karstic formations at Phnom Loang, in the province of Kampot, Jean-Pierre Carbonnel<sup>12</sup> reported deposits containing a palaeolithic fauna similar to that of Chou-kou-t'ien in China and also an industry based mainly on bone. It would not seem too unreasonable to suppose the existence in the Far East of prehistoric tribes skilled in making bone tools, Phnom Loang being one of the last representatives.<sup>13</sup> Also at Phnom Loang, a number of caves have yielded elements with bone attesting to the existence of a neolithic phase in the area. Cave deposits of Phnom Kbal Romeas in the same area is dated to the 4th millennium B.C. but it has not yet been the object of any close study.

Samrong Sen has yielded the first data on the use of copper and bronze in Cambodia. According to Solheim, however, "bronze is first known from South East Asia from Non Nok Tha in north-eastern Thailand at about 2300 B.C. or earlier ... and there is good evidence for early working of bronze in central southeast Asia with the possibility of local evolution from copper to bronze working, whether originally locally invented or brought from the West".<sup>14</sup> It should also be mentioned that in the delta of the Mekong, polished stone axes have been recovered and a certain number of open air sites discovered. Phnom Bathe, an important pre-Angkor site, is one of them.<sup>15</sup>

Some megalithic remains have also been reported. The problem of South East Asian megaliths still awaits a solution which for the moment seems to be far off.

Too many questions remain unanswered and "a re-examination of the known sites may provide the answer to some of these questions".<sup>16</sup>

This brief survey of prehistoric research in Cambodia shows that this field of study is still in its infancy. One can only hope that more exploration and systematic excavation will be undertaken in the future if a complete picture of South East Asian prehistory is to be obtained.

The beginning of the historic period of Cambodia starts with the emergence of a kingdom which dominated the area for a few centuries. The history of this powerful kingdom relies principally on Chinese dynastic histories, translated and published by Paul Pelliot more than seventy years ago and which still remains the basic study of this early period.<sup>17</sup>

It is generally established that during the first centuries of the Christian era, in the lower Mekong valley there developed and flourished a kingdom, one of the earliest in South East Asia, known by the name of Funan. The capital city of this state is believed to have been somewhere near the hill of Baphnom in the province of Prei Veng, in southern present day Cambodia. The term Funan, according to George Coedes, "is the modern Mandarin pronunciation of two characters once pronounced \*b'iu-nam, which is the transcription of the Old Khmer word bnam, the modern form of which is phnom, 'mountain'."<sup>18</sup> However, as Claude Jacques has recently reminded us,<sup>19</sup> followed by Professor O.W. Wolters,<sup>20</sup> the

equivalence of the local term bnam and Funan is only a hypothesis.

The earliest information concerning Funan comes from a record left by a Chinese mission to this state in the middle of the 3rd century A.D.<sup>21</sup> which reported that the first ruler of Funan was Hun-t'ien or Kaunḍinya, believed to have come either from India or from the Malay peninsula.<sup>22</sup> One of Hun-t'ien's successors, Fan-she-man, was a brave and capable ruler who, according to the History of the Southern Chi, conquered more than ten kingdoms and extended his territory over a large area.<sup>23</sup> Because of its geographical position and the agricultural resources of the delta of the Mekong, Funan was able to expand both along the coast and to the north and east and also up the Mekong valley into the fertile plain of present central Cambodia. In this way, Funan established its hegemony over the area around the Gulf of Siam until the 5th century A.D.

The capital city of Funan, at least for a time, is generally believed to have been at Vyādhapura, "the city of hunters"; T'e-mu of the Chinese chronicles.<sup>24</sup>

Vyādhapura was apparently connected with a sea port which excavations in the delta of the Mekong seem to locate at Oc-Eo.<sup>25</sup> Numerous finds at this site provide evidence of an active maritime relation between the area and the coast of the Gulf of Siam, the Indonesian archipelago and possibly with the Mediterranean world, too, through the intermediary of India. These various finds, dating roughly from between the 2nd and the 5th

century A.D., suggest a long occupation of the site.

The next important ruler of Funan was She-ye-pa-mo, or Jayavarman.<sup>26</sup> The History of the Southern Chi speaks of Jayavarman's envoy to the Chinese court and it was during the reign of this king that two Funanese monks were sent to China, around 480 A.D., to help in translating Buddhist texts into Chinese. Jayavarman was regarded by the Chinese imperial court as a great ruler. This is reflected in the grandiose title of "General of the pacified south, King of Funan" conferred on him in 503 A.D. by the imperial court of the Liang.<sup>27</sup>

The last important king of Funan was Rudravarman. He is known to have sent various embassies to China between 517 and 539 A.D. A passage from the History of the Liang speaks of a Chinese embassy sent to Funan between 535 and 545 A.D. to ask its king to collect Buddhist texts and send Buddhist teachers to China.<sup>28</sup>

After Rudravarman, Funan went through a period of internal troubles. Although embassies from Funan were still recorded in the New History of the T'ang in the first half of the 7th century A.D., there were indications that a great change had taken place in the country. Chenla, a former northern vassal of Funan, under a prince named Bhavavarman and his cousin Chitrasena attacked Funan in the second half of the 6th century. Bhavavarman's capital, Bhavapura, must have been located on the northern shore of Tonle Sap, in the vicinity of Ampil Rolum, a site north-east of the province of Kampong Thom.<sup>29</sup> His

cousin and successor Chitrasena, who took the coronation name of Mahendravarman at the time of his accession around 600 A.D.,<sup>30</sup> left a number of inscriptions in the Dangrek mountain area, suggesting that he still continued his predecessor's policy which was one of expansion towards the south. But it was not until the reign of his son, Īśānavarman, that the ancient territory of Funan was totally brought under the control of Chenla.

The authority of Īśānavarman became well established as is confirmed by his numerous inscriptions found in the provinces of Kampong Cham, Prei Veng, Kandal and Takeo in present southern Cambodia, and also by the New History of the T'ang which attributed to him the conquest of Funan at the beginning of the period 627-649 A.D.<sup>31</sup> Evidence from an inscription<sup>32</sup> coupled with the mention of two embassies in 623 A.D. and 628 A.D. give reason to believe that Īśānavarman's reign lasted until at least around 635 A.D.<sup>33</sup> The capital city of this new powerful kingdom was Īśānapura which has generally been identified with one of the groups of ruins at Sambor Prei Kuk, in the north of the province of Kampong Thom.<sup>34</sup>

After Īśānavarman came another ruler by the name of Bhavavarman II<sup>35</sup> who was succeeded by his son Jayavarman I. Numerous inscriptions attest to the expansion and progressive strengthening of the power of Chenla over the whole area of ancient Funan in the basin of the Tonle Sap and in the delta area of the Mekong. Jayavarman I's reign ended after 690 A.D.<sup>36</sup>

Following Jayavarman's death, Chenla underwent

a period of internal rebellion which resulted in the break up of the kingdom shortly after 706 A.D. into Land Chenla, a land of mountains and valleys in the north, and Water Chenla, the southern half bounded by the sea and covered with lakes. Of the two, only Land Chenla, or Upper Chenla, appears to have had some degree of unity with a centralized power, attested by an embassy to China in 717 A.D.<sup>37</sup> and an expedition in 722 A.D. to help a native chief in his revolt against China.<sup>38</sup> During the second half of the 8th century, Chinese chronicles recorded embassies from Land Chenla till as late as 799 A.D.

As for Water Chenla, or Lower Chenla, it seems that the country was divided into several principalities, at least five, one of which was Aninditapura under the rule of a certain Bālāditya who "must have somehow been related to the ancient kings of Funan".<sup>39</sup> At least part of Water Chenla appears to have become more or less tributary to Java during the latter decades of the 8th century A.D.

After this dramatic period, which lasted for about a century, Jayavarman II, a distant descendant of the rulers of Aninditapura, one of the principalities of Water Chenla, emerged in 802 A.D. as a successful monarch whose military power finally reunited the country, and thus laid the foundations of the Angkor empire which was to be a dominating power in mainland South East Asia for more than four centuries.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. J. Boisselier, Le Cambodge, Paris, 1966, pp. 14-15. Following this division are two other chapters of Cambodian history, namely the Angkor period, beginning with Jayavarman II's reign and lasting until the end of the 13th century A.D., and the post-Angkor period which takes us up to the present day, characterized by the definitive adoption of Theravada Buddhism and the establishment of new capitals in the south (Lovek, Phnom-Penh ...).
2. W.G. Solheim, II, "Reworking Southeast Asian Pre-history", Paideuma, XV, 1969, p. 137; "An earlier agricultural revolution", Scientific American, April 1972, vol. 226, pp. 34-41.
3. W.G. Solheim II, "An earlier agricultural revolution", Scientific American, vol. 226, April 1972, pp. 34-41.
4. H. Mansuy, Stations préhistoriques de Samrong Sen et Long Prao (Cambodge), Hanoi, 1902;  
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CHAPTER 3  
FUNAN AND OC-EO

The history of present day Cambodia, as generally agreed by scholars, begins with a period usually referred to as the Funanese period. The term Funanese is derived from the name of a kingdom known through Chinese dynastic histories as Funan. Chinese texts relating to Funan were translated and published by Paul Pelliot more than seventy years ago. This still remains the basic study of this early period.<sup>1</sup>

It has been established that the centre of this early kingdom in South East Asia was in an area comprising present day southern Cambodia and the Mekong delta. The capital city of this kingdom, at least for a time, is believed to have been at Vyādhapura, "the city of hunters", located near the hill of Baphnom in the present southern Cambodian province of Prei Veng. Vyādhapura is linked to a maritime port that excavations in the delta of the Mekong tend to establish at Oc-Eo, a vast site between the town of Rach-Gia and Long-Xuyen in present South Vietnam.<sup>2</sup>

Excavations at Oc-Eo started in 1944.<sup>3</sup> The whole area of the delta of the Mekong had been neglected for quite a long period by scholars. Two reasons were probably responsible for this. First, the nature of the area itself. It was widely believed that, geologically, the delta of the Mekong was an alluvial plain of recent formation. The second reason, suggested by Coedès, is

possibly that the presence of a Vietnamese majority living in the area led scholars to believe that it was not part of the ancient Khmer empire and not, therefore, of any potential archaeological value. But it was forgotten that the Vietnamese occupation of this part of Indochina only dated back to the 16th century<sup>4</sup> at the earliest and before this period the whole area had been part of the ancient Khmer empire. Archaeological research, particularly by Malleret, in the Transbassac and the Cisbassac, provides sufficient evidence to prove this.

Of some 120 sites discovered during the exploration of this part of Indochina, at least 12, located in the Transbassac could be considered as belonging to the Funan period. The most important site is Oc-Eo, at about 25 kms. from the coast of the Gulf of Siam.<sup>5</sup> The area in which the site of Oc-Eo lies presents a feature common to the entire area of the delta region of the Mekong. It is an alluvial plain from which emerge scattered mounds, often of insignificant height, recognisable by the presence of piles of blocks, slabs of granite and also bricks. The centre of this plain is occupied by the Phnom Bathe, a granitic massif dominating the whole western part of the Transbassac.<sup>6</sup> Judging from the remains recovered from this massif, it is clear that it was intensively populated in ancient times and was probably one of the most ancient sacred places in the area.

The site of Oc-Eo (Fig. 2) covers a vast area about 1.5 km. to the south east of Phnom Bathe.

Explorations undertaken in 1946 by Malleret, on whose account the following description is based, confirmed what was seen on aerial photographs taken in 1928. They revealed traces of an enclosure still visible on three sides: south, west and east indicating a rectangle of 3000 by 1500 metres. The enclosure consists of five ditches. It is crossed by an ancient canal running south west and north east toward the Bassac river. Two other channels or causeways run parallel to this main artery. The city seems to be divided into ten sections, each 600 by 400 metres. Traces of canals or causeways marking this division are still discernible from the air. Each of the sections seems to correspond to an ancient quarter.

Inside the enclosure there are a number of mounds (tuol). The most important is the Tuol O Keo or Go Oc-Eo, the only toponym which seems to be original among all the toponyms of the site; the other names indicate either persons, for example Tuol Ta Kong, "mound of Old Kong", or trees or plants.

Apart from archaeological evidence, its geographical location would suggest that Oc-Eo was a fort of great importance to its hinterland. Its site only a few kilometres from the present coast of the Gulf of Siam, which must not have changed much since the beginning of the Christian era, was well chosen. It provided links with the outside world through trade and commerce and thus a basis and even means for cultural contacts. But other factors must have been taken into account in

choosing the location of Oc-Eo. The fact that it is at a short distance from the sea and not far from hills, namely the Hon Soc, Hon Dat and Hon Me, must have been one of the reasons. Another was Phnom Bathe itself which dominates the whole area and can be seen from a long distance on the seaward side regardless of the direction taken by sea-farers travelling in the neighbourhood of the delta. Religious factors also must have played a role, if not a decisive one, in choosing the foot of a hill as the site of a city. It is not unusual that mountain, hill, peak are regarded as sacred, as abodes of gods and this seems to be confirmed by the numerous remains of temples and statues recovered from the area around Phnom Bathe.

Excavations carried out at Oc-Eo, although on a small scale in relation to the size of the site and despite difficulties due to the nature of the waterlogged terrain, yielded a large number of finds ranging in dates roughly from the 2nd to the 5th century A.D.<sup>7</sup> The diversity of the finds suggests that the site was occupied over a long period and this is plausibly confirmed by the numerous heaps of sea-shells scattered all over the site.

Evidence recovered from Oc-Eo suggests the relationship of the site with a large area including the coast of the Gulf of Siam, the Malay peninsula, India and most probably, whether directly or indirectly, with the Mediterranean world. It is well known that great western Indian ports traded with the Roman empire

in the early centuries of the Christian era. Contacts between western India and South East Asia during this early period seems to be well established. Excavations in southern Thailand and the Malay peninsula prove that South East Asia was involved in the early Mediterranean trade. Thus it is not surprising that objects of Roman origin turned up in different coastal areas of South East Asia as a result of trading activities. There seems to be no doubt about the cultural contacts between north-western India and the Mekong delta. Malleret's excavations of Oc-Eo revealed a number of objects probably of north-western Indian origin, among which is a blue turquoise seal with a figure recalling a Sassanian nobleman.<sup>8</sup> Many gems, inscribed in a script which Professor Jean Filliozat thinks is that of brāhmi used in north and central India between the 2nd and the 5th centuries A.D.,<sup>9</sup> were also found at Oc-Eo. At other sites, also in the Mekong delta area, for example at Phnom Bathe, a Buddha head of Gandharan type was recovered.<sup>10</sup> Also recovered were a few statues of Surya wearing short tunic, boots and mitre which are perhaps a reflection of Indo-Scythian influence.<sup>11</sup> Coedès, following Sylvain Lévi's suggestion, thinks there may be a dynastic link between Funan and the Indo-Scythian kings.<sup>12</sup> According to Wolters,<sup>13</sup> there seems to be no doubt that contacts existed between western and north western India and other parts of South East Asia, in particular with the Malay peninsula.

In Ptolemy's account there was a city by the name of Kattigara which scholars have agreed to locate in

the southern part of the present day Indochinese peninsula. The position of Oc-Eo on the coast of the Gulf of Siam, the presence of numerous objects of Mediterranean origin leads to the question whether Oc-Eo could have had any connections with Kattigara.

Many attempts have been made to locate this town of Kattigara. Although opinions still differ, many scholars seem to agree to place it in the area around the present capital of South Vietnam, Saigon. R. Stein,<sup>14</sup> following A. Herrmann, felt confident in saying that he could consider as an established fact the localization of Kattigara in the Saigon area, although he did not propose a precise location. Paul Levy, at one point, also thought to locate Kattigara in the Saigon area.<sup>15</sup> There is a site which could correspond to an ancient agglomeration near Saigon. But, although the site still awaits excavation, Malleret's examination of this place has not yielded any significant clues to suggest that it had been the site of an ancient city. Since no archaeological explorations of the eastern part of Cochinchina have as yet been systematically undertaken, the localization of Kattigara in the Saigon area remains still a possibility. Despite this, Malleret proposed a new identification of Kattigara. He locates this town in the plain of Cent Rues, in the southern tip of the Camau point of the Mekong delta.

From the excavations of Oc-Eo, one fact is certain. Traders, merchants coming from abroad to settle in this area met an indigenous people who were already

masters of the region and possessed a certain degree of civilization. Malleret has proposed to see four principal types of cultures in the delta of the Mekong.<sup>16</sup>

These are:

1. The neolithic period, attested to by stone implements found in caves, primitive pottery associated with heaps of sea-shells bearing some resemblances to those of Samrong Sen in northern Cambodia. This period could be called pre-Funanese.

2. The period of agricultural and economic prosperity, deduceable from the presence of settlements generally linked with one another by a system of canals and also by objects such as gems and ornaments. This culture maintains a close relationship with Indian culture and constitutes the Funanese period.

3. The pre-Angkor period, attested to by sculptures and carvings ranging in date from the 6th to the 8th centuries A.D.

4. Finally the Angkor period represented particularly in the eastern part of the delta and on the river banks by statues dating to the 11th and 12th centuries A.D.

The characteristic trait of the Oc-Eo culture seems to be the so-called "tin civilization" defined by Malleret. This feature seems, so far, to be confined to this area and undoubtedly represents the distinctive characteristic of the Funan period.<sup>17</sup> However, recent excavations in the Menam basin in Thailand have revealed a similar material.<sup>18</sup> Further study of this

material, in comparison with that of Oc-Eo would help better to define the Funan culture and to specify the relative chronology of Oc-Eo.

Regarding the people of Funan, the question remains open. Various theories have been put forward to try to identify the inhabitants of this early kingdom. One of the theories postulates a non-Khmer population in Funan. Dupont<sup>19</sup> thinks that archaeology, epigraphy and folklore suggest that the ancestors of the pre-Angkorian Khmer first came down into the Tonle Sap basin in the 6th century A.D. from an early centre in present day lower Laos. He proposes that the present Cambodian language came into being in the territory around the confluence of the Me Nam Mun with the Mekong.

This theory perhaps gave rise to other views among which was the one expressed by J.F. Cady<sup>20</sup> who argues that the Funanese were of Indonesian ethnic stock and probably spoke an Austronesian language. In support of this view is the fact that in the inscription of Vo-Canh, in present South Vietnam, and probably the earliest written document in South East Asia, words of Austronesian origin were used. Besides, a mass of data concerning the culture of the various Austronesian speaking peoples tends to support this idea.<sup>21</sup> Another hypothesis, however, favours cautious identification of the language and people of Funan with the later Khmer. This was the view of G. Coedès.<sup>22</sup> For L.P. Briggs,<sup>23</sup> the Funanese "must have spoken Khmer or a language closely related to it".

Professor D.G.E. Hall thinks of Funan that "its people were Indonesians who were in the tribal state at the dawn of history. They spoke a pre-Khmer Austro-Asiatic language, though at the end of the Funan period they seem to have exchanged this for Old Khmer".<sup>24</sup> But in the second edition of this same book there is no mention regarding the language of the Funanese. Instead Hall simply states that "the Funanese were of Malay race, and still in the tribal state at the dawn of history"; Malay being used here in its widest ethnic sense.<sup>25</sup>

Professor P.N. Jenner, however, says that "in the absence of epigraphical or other remains of language which may have preceded Khmer in Cambodia, it has not been possible to demonstrate that Khmer was the common language of Funan, the Indianized maritime state which occupied the Mekong delta before the pre-Angkorian period (roughly 550 A.D. to 802)."<sup>26</sup> This view seems to be supported by more linguistic evidence. Mrs Saveros Fou, through her comparative studies, postulates "the importance of the pre-inscriptional stage of Khmer and Mon, when these languages probably had more in common than is visible through written documents".<sup>27</sup>

Recent archaeological excavations in Thailand have revealed a strong similarity between the material found at Oc-Eo and at various sites in Thailand.<sup>28</sup> In the light of these works one wonders whether the Funanese and the Mon, one of the earliest groups occupying the Lower Menam basin, had more in common than has generally been thought.

The Mon kingdom of Dvaravati and its strong Buddhist character may, in the light of future investigations, prove that its role and its importance had been underestimated.

More recently a new term has been proposed for the people who occupy mainly present day southern China and eastern Indochina. Instead of "Indonesian", a term used "for convenience sake" to designate the pre- and protohistoric peoples of "austral Asia", the term "Austroasian" is used, since nowadays "scholars have generally agreed that these prehistoric peoples had not come either from India or from any of the islands of South East Asia, but like their predecessors, the Australoids and the Melanosoids, they were from Southern Asia, south of the Blue river, of which the original centre is situated in South China and in North Vietnam".<sup>29</sup>

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

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2. Malleret, ADM, 4 vols. (1959, 60, 62, 63).
3. "Les fouilles d'Oc-Eo", BEFEO, XLV, 1, 1951, pp. 75-88.
4. According to Mr A.H. Christie.
5. The name of Oc-Eo, according to P. Bitard, is the Vietnamese version of the Cambodian name O-Keo, "river of jewel". Malleret is inclined to see O-Keo as the translation of an ancient toponym having the same meaning.
6. This place was visited for the first time by Dr Corre in 1879. See Excursions et Reconnaissances, n. 3, 1880, pp. 277-283 and Malleret, ADM, I, p. 75.
7. Admittedly conducted under difficult conditions, much of Malleret's work shows technical inadequacy as justly pointed out by Mr A.H. Christie.
8. Malleret, ADM, III, 1962, pp. 327-73.
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15. See Malleret, ADM, III, p. 444.
16. Malleret, ADM, I, p. 178.
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20. J.F. Cady, Southeast Asia, its historical development, 1964, p. 53.
21. We owe this suggestion to Mr A.H. Christie.
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23. L.P. Briggs, The Ancient Khmer Empire, 1955, p. 15.
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26. P.N. Jenner, Affixation in Modern Khmer, Ph.D. thesis, 1969, University of Hawaii, p. 1.
27. S. Pou, "The word ác in Khmer: a semantic overview", South-East Asian Linguistic Studies, special publication of Pacific Linguistics, Series C., n. 31, Ed. Nguyen Dang Liem, Canberra, 1974, p. 177; and "Notes de morphologie Khmère", ASEMI, VI, 4, 1975, p. 64.
28. Boisselier, "Récentes recherches archéologiques en Thaïlande", AA, XII, pp. 125-74; B. Bronson and G.F. Dales, "Excavations at Chansen, 1968-1969", Silpakon, 14, 1, pp. 41-58.
29. Nguyen Phuc Long, "Les nouvelles recherches archéologiques au Vietnam", Arts Asiatiques,  AA, numero special, 1975, p. 12.

CHAPTER 4  
SOUTHERN PROVINCES OF CAMBODIA  
UP TO THE 8th CENTURY A.D.

The area referred to as southern Cambodia in the present work is made up of four provinces namely those of Kampong Speu, Kampot, Kandal and Prey Veng (Fig. 3). The richness of this area in terms of archaeological remains seems never to cease to surprise those who study the ancient history of Cambodia. A good example of this case is provided by the discovery in the southern part of the province of Kandal, at Tuol Kuhea, of archaeological remains which have caused scholars to reconsider some of the views hitherto considered as established.

Recent investigations in the field of art history of the pre-Angkor period have brought to light new ideas which tend, on the whole, to contradict, rather than to confirm, previously held opinions. In this chapter, it is proposed to consider some of the sites and re-examine the chronological position of the remains they have yielded.

1. The Prei Pvoch Area (Fig. 4)

The region between the waterways Prek Tnot and Prek Toch, respectively in the provinces of Kampong Speu and Kandal, has not been regarded as containing any important archaeological remains which were worth close

attention. Since 1927 however, when Henri Parmentier published his major work L'Art Khmer Primitif, a certain number of monuments related to this "primitive art" have been discovered, thanks to the systematic explorations of Robert Dalet<sup>1</sup> and Pierre Paris.<sup>2</sup> The amount of material recovered and the numerous sites discovered compelled Parmentier to add a supplement to his 1927 study.<sup>3</sup>

From Dalet's survey made in the 1930s one particular region stands out as the most interesting. This is the area around the monastery of Prei Puoch (Kampong Speu). This locality in fact has some 15 mounds grouped in a radius of about 1.5 kilometres. The terrain was sufficiently impressive to make Dalet feel that he was standing on the site of an ancient city with its numerous monuments.<sup>4</sup>

Every mound which was visited by Dalet contains remains attesting to the existence of ancient structures and, as Dalet learned from local villagers, the same is true of other mounds in the vicinity. Dalet excavated some of the mounds he visited because of their apparent importance and they did in fact yield interesting finds. These are summarised below.

#### Tuol Ang Srah Romchang

The excavation showed that the site had been used as a burial place during the last two or three centuries. More than a hundred pots containing relics

were unearthed. Four of these had in them a silver coin with the figure of a bird on it. No illustration of the coin has been published but it is most probable that it was the type used in the 18th century. Among other finds were some small votive plaques made of gold and silver, stamped with a Buddha image. At a depth of about 3.50 m. another series of objects was discovered. They included a small standing Ganeśa image with two arms. Among the rest were three lingas, showing only the ovoid bulb with the frenum outlined in pronounced relief and resting on small cubic base, and one fragment and two bases of round colonnettes. Also found were a number of pebbles, round or ovoid in shape. Some small prehistoric tools, presumably left over from the looting of the sacred deposit of the sanctuary, were also found, in positions which indicated disturbance. But the most important find from Tuol Ang Srah Romchang was a four-armed standing statue of a deity with a backing slab. This image is studied below.

#### Neak Ta Pun Sva

This site yielded a big statue of Ganeśa, about 1.25 m. high.

#### Vat Ang Preah Peay

From this site a fragment of a 7th century inscription was found<sup>5</sup> along with a lintel, a round colonnette and the lower part of a female statue.

Tuol Khariet

This is another mound with a moat, now transformed into ricefields. A big heap of bricks was found on it, but it was not excavated.

Tuol Preah Theat

This is the largest of a group of mounds. Excavations of this site yielded: a standing Buddha image, four stone tools (among which were two scrapers and one small axe made of schist), a conch shell from a statue, two linga bases, several doorjambs, one of which bears an inscription, an inscribed Buddha image, dated on palaeographic grounds to the 6th or 7th century A.D., the remains of a big triple section linga, the ovoid bulb of which has a small human head at the base of the frenum. The sacred deposit, at a depth of five metres yielded another triple section linga (more than 1 m. high) with ovoid bulb. This sanctuary has a brick cella and is surrounded by a brick enclosure.

To the north of this main shrine, there was another tower also enclosing a brick cella, of which only the base and some pilasters survived. It is also surrounded by an enclosure about 1 m. high; the position of the entrance was not determined. The eastern front of the tower shows remains of structures probably of later date. At Tuol Preah Theat at least six images had been worshipped. They were three linga and three statues, some of which are attested only by fragments of arms.

### Tuol Mean Chei

About 1500 metres to the east of Tuol Preah Theat is a big heap of bricks which could correspond to two towers. At Neak Ta Troey Beng, the lower part of a flexed male statue was recovered. Tuol Ang Troey Beng, another large mound with remains of several edifices, probably in east-west alignment, yielded fragments of pedestals and a linga base.

### Tuol Ang Srah Theat

From this site several 7th century remains were recovered. These are discussed below. They include a lintel of the Sambor Prei Kuk style, two round colonnettes, more or less complete, a triple section linga with ovoid bulb, a schist linga base with mortice. In the sacred deposit was a small prehistoric axe and at a depth of four metres there were four schist slabs arranged to mark an opening.

The base of the main tower at Tuol Ang Srah Theat was partly exposed and showed a brick cella enclosed in it. Between the eastern staircase and the doorway of the cella were scattered pieces of slabs, various decorated bricks, a few fragments of round colonnettes and the remains of the head of a statue.

To the north of this main tower there was a smaller one, its base decorated with plain mouldings.

The sacred deposit yielded nothing except the brick-paved floor at a depth of three metres. Local traditions insisted that an inscription existed at this site. This was confirmed during the clearance of the mound: the south doorjamb of the main tower bears an inscription of twenty lines dated 553 Śaka (631 A.D.) relating the foundation of a linga by a brahman.

#### Tuol Ang Kambot Ka

This site yielded several remains, some of which will be studied further on. These finds include a small linga with ovoid bulb on a square base with tenon; fragments of round colonnettes decorated with rings surrounded by leaf motif; a human-size statute of Viṣṇu with four arms; a second Viṣṇu image with a supporting arch of horse-shoe shape.

At Neak Ta Ang Tros another fragment of a pre-Angkor inscription was found<sup>6</sup> and a fragment of an inscribed door jamb was extracted from Tuol Mong.<sup>7</sup>

#### The Tuol Ang Srah Romchang Image (Plate 1)

This is a four-armed image of a deity backed against a slab which is rounded in the upper part; the whole stands on a cubic base. The head, the posterior hands and both shoulders have suffered severe damage.

The figure wears a sampot, a large piece of cloth wrapped around the lower part of the body, which

stops slightly below the knees. As Parmentier, who first reported this image and described it,<sup>8</sup> correctly observed the main interest of this figure lies in the way it is dressed. Indeed this costume appears to be unique among statues found in Cambodia. The sampot shows a sort of straight, flat belt with two little arches in front of each leg. The folds of the drapery held by the anterior hands fall down and reach the base, forming two supports, detached from the slab. The right posterior hand appears to hold the cakra, and the left, the skin of a small four-legged animal which, according to Parmentier, would seem to be that of an ox rather than that of the expected antelope. Of the head of the statue, only the long earlobes touching the shoulders can still be seen.

Boisselier, in a study of the Viṣṇu image of Tjibwaja,<sup>9</sup> regarded the Tuol Ang Srah Romchang image as of a degraded technique "puisque'il s'agit d'un haut-relief".<sup>10</sup> Although it is the first time that a statue like the Tuol Ang Srah Romchang image has been found in Cambodia, it is by no means an isolated case in South East Asia. In fact as Parmentier already remarked, this image bears some resemblances to another statue from Baray Andet, in the province of Prei Veng<sup>11</sup> on which there is also a semi-circular arch in front of the dress. Statues from southern Thailand dressed in this manner have also been recently studied by Stanley O'Connor.<sup>12</sup>

Boisselier had shown that statues with this type of dress belong to a series of images found all

over South East Asia including Java and the Malay peninsula. His detailed study of this group of images has led him to conclude that a particular style, probably originating in South India, had spread from the 7th to 8th centuries to most parts of South East Asia.<sup>13</sup>

O'Connor, on the other hand, believes that images with four arms and whose dress includes a sash forming an arch in front and a heavy vertical fold of drapery falling down between the legs, are much more ancient than was previously anticipated. Indeed he proposes to date the prototype of this series of image to the 5th century A.D.<sup>14</sup>

The fact that the Tuol Ang Srah Romchang is a "haut-relief" does not seem to be a criterion for calling it "degraded" and thus dating it to a late period. In fact Dupont<sup>15</sup> has shown that one of the earliest and oldest statues found in South East Asia was a "haut-relief". This is the image of Kṛṣṇa Govardhana from Vat Koh near Angkor Borei, dated back to the first half of the 6th century A.D.

One or two facts about the Tuol Ang Srah Romchang are worth considering. In the first place there are in the vicinity of Tuol Ang Srah Romchang, a number of remains dating from the early style of Sambor Prei Kuk (first half of the 7th century A.D.). In particular there are remains from Tuol Ang Srah Theat, a neighbouring mound, where a standing Buddha statue was recovered and dated roughly to the same period, if not earlier. There is also an inscription dated 631 A.D.

It is quite possible that the Tuol Ang Srah Romchang statue may go back to the same period, that is the first half of the 7th century. Regarding the identity of the image, although the attributes held in the posterior hands are not very clear, it is very tempting to see in this image a representation of Viṣṇu or Harihara.

#### Remains From Tuol Ang Srah Theat

This is one of the most important mounds in the district of Prei Puoch, province of Kampong Speu. It was excavated by Dalet. Among the remains recovered from Tuol Ang Srah Theat was a lintel (Plate 2a) clearly belonging to the pre-Angkor period of Khmer art. It was first studied by Dalet.<sup>16</sup> This piece of sculpture, although badly eroded, shows an arch coming out of the mouth of a makara, an aquatic monster, and divided into segments by three medallions. According to Dalet, who discovered the piece, the central medallion represents Indra riding the elephant Airavata; the other two appear to show a nāga-rāja, ridden by a woman.<sup>17</sup> From the segmented arch hang falling garlands and strings of pearl motif. These characteristics clearly classify the Tuol Ang Srah Theat lintel as being in the style of Sambor Prei Kuk, generally believed to date from the beginning of the 7th century A.D. to around 655 A.D. Dalet in his study seems to contradict himself on the chronological position of this piece.<sup>18</sup>

The lintels of Sambor Prei Kuk style were studied by Dupont in a detailed article.<sup>19</sup> Basing his arguments on morphological change of certain motifs including the legs of the makara, he regarded the Tuol Ang Srah Theat piece as belonging to the end of the Sambor Prei Kuk style.<sup>20</sup>

M. Bénisti, coming back to the problem later on,<sup>21</sup> remarks that in Khmer lintels of this period, the position of the makara legs, whether flexed or straight, is not a sufficient indication for a later date.<sup>22</sup>

She also contests some of Dupont's remarks on the development of certain motifs. But in later works<sup>23</sup> she also places the Tuol Ang Srah Theat lintel to the end of the Sambor Prei Kuk style, though basing her argument on different criteria.<sup>24</sup>

Also recovered from Tuol Ang Srah Theat were two round colonnettes (Plate 2b), more or less complete, decorated with three motifs bordered by raised fillets. The uppermost shows hanging garland and strings of pearl motif; the central ring, two alternating motifs and the lower ring, fleurons and scrolls. At each extremity of the colonnette is the "bande à chatons", a motif of alternating rectangle and ovals, on the basis of which Bénisti places these colonnettes in the Sambor Prei Kuk style.<sup>25</sup> She also remarks<sup>26</sup> that Dupont, in his study on "Les linteaux Khmers du VIIIème siècle", overlooked this motif.

Perhaps the most important find from Tuol Ang Srah Theat was an inscription engraved presumably on the

south doorjamb of the main tower.<sup>27</sup> It is a 19 lines inscription written in Old Khmer, except the first two lines which are in Sanskrit, and dated 573 Śaka (651 A.D.).<sup>28</sup> Dalet, however, mentioned 20 lines and gave the date as 553 Śaka (635 A.D.).<sup>29</sup> It relates the foundation of a līṅga, Sri Kedaresvara, by a Brahman, Mratañ Anantasvami, and his donations of servants, ricefields, orchards and various objects for the cult to the god. It is tempting to see in the triple section līṅga, also recovered during Dalet's excavation of the site, the representation of Sri Kedaresvara, the revered god mentioned in this inscription. Dalet himself had already suggested this identification.<sup>30</sup> In fact it is clear that the piece in question belongs to the pre-Angkor period.

It is also on the strength of this same inscription that Bénisti has proposed to see in her "bande à chatons" a mark having a chronological indication, hence her dating of the lintel and colonnette of Tuol Ang Srah Theat to the end of the Sambor Prei Kuk style. Her findings offer an interesting cross-check to Dupont's stylistic analysis.<sup>31</sup>

#### Remains From Tuol Ang Kambot Ka

This is another mound excavated by Dalet in 1938.<sup>32</sup> It yielded a small līṅga with ovoid bulb, on a square base with a tenon. Also recovered were fragments of round colonnettes with decorative rings. Parmentier<sup>33</sup> described Tuol Ang Kambot Ka as a large mound which

contains the remains of at least three towers. Dalet's work revealed at least two of these structures, one of which is a square brick cella.

From this site two images were recovered. Unfortunately no illustrations of these two images have ever been published, but their descriptions, left by Parmentier, leave no doubt as to the period to which they belong. Both of them were made in the pre-Angkor period.

The first image is a remarkable statue, about human size and representing a standing Viṣṇu with four arms. The arms and legs are missing. The god is represented smiling, according to Parmentier from whom this description is extracted.<sup>34</sup> On the head, the god wears a tall cylindrical mitre, placed upon the hair which is neatly presented in the form called "boucle anglaise" falling on the back of the neck. This indicates the antiquity of the image for this feature appears only in the Phnom Da and Sambor Prei Kuk styles. The earlobes bear holes designed to receive removable jewels. The dress consists of a sampot showing curved and spaced pleats starting from the buckle of the belt and continuing on the buttocks. Between the leg is a fold of drapery having at each end a swallow tail shape.

The second image was recovered from the northwest corner of the mound. It represents a standing image backed against a slab and has four arms. Without tenon it measures 82 cm. Parmentier noticed that the space between the body and the arms of the god is hollowed out. The statue has lost its head and its attributes. Despite

this loss, Parmentier and Dalet still saw in this image a Viṣṇu. It is quite likely for in this period, images with a backing slab and four arms usually represent Viṣṇu. Of the dress Parmentier said only that the sampot is draped around the body leaving a central fold.

## 2. The Tuol Koh Image (Plate 3)

Tuol Koh is a mound in the district of Romenh, province of Takeo. From this site a statue, head and arms missing, was recovered. In order to try to find the remains of this image Dalet excavated the site<sup>35</sup> which yielded, not the expected missing pieces, but fragments of other images proving that there were at least three of them on this site. The exact location of the structures sheltering the sculptures was however impossible to determine, owing to disturbances caused by Buddhist monks to the mound.

The statue recovered from Tuol Koh represents a standing male image of nearly one metre high; the head and arms are missing. The upper part of the torso is decorated with an ornate necklace, badly eroded. On the abdomen are three "plis de beauté". The image wears a long robe falling down well below the knees. Around the hips is a twisted scarf which falls obliquely towards the left side. The robe is fastened around the waist by a belt plastically rendered by a thin ridge of stone. In the front, a raised fold of cloth passes under the hip sash and falls down between the legs to

reach the base of the statue. This drapery fold serves as a support to the image. Other supports are provided by the falling ends of the sash which has a "noeud bouffant" at its extremity.

At waist level, what remains of the two missing arms are still visible. The left hand, resting on the hip, holds a conch while the right, with a bracelet on the wrist, is open and appears to hold an indistinct attribute. The Tuol Koh image, because of its peculiarities, appears to be unique in the pre-Angkor statuary.<sup>36</sup> However, it presents some features which recall a group of sculptures from Southern Thailand and the Malay peninsula. These images have already been the subject of detailed studies by Dupont<sup>37</sup> and Boisselier,<sup>38</sup> and more recently by O'Connor.<sup>39</sup>

By comparing the Tuol Koh image with the one found at Chaiya, in southern Thailand, Dupont was able to specify that the Tuol Koh image is a four-armed Viṣṇu wearing a mitre. One should also remember that the order in which the attributes are held by images of four-armed Viṣṇu, provides, at least in theory, a precise iconographical identification of the God.<sup>40</sup> In the pre-Angkor statuary standing images of Viṣṇu with four arms usually hold the attributes in this order: earth in the lower right, discus in the upper right, club in the lower left and conch in the upper one. However, the Tuol Koh image, and some others from Thailand and Malaysia, present a different order in the way these same attributes are held and, according to Dupont, this represents an

evolution towards different mūrti, a tendency developed in India but without parallel in South East Asia.

The chronological position of the Tuol Koh image has been discussed by previous scholars. Dupont, having compared this image with the one from Chaiya, concludes that it is not a statue "particulièrement archaïque mais une production assez fruste dérivant d'images locales". He believes that this is an "art autochtone ... caractérisé par la reproduction d'apports indiens qui peuvent être restitués mais ne sont pas tous de même époque". The centre of this production remains to be located but seems to have been outside Chenla.<sup>41</sup> However, he does not exclude the possibility of relationship between the group of Viṣṇu images from southern Thailand, to which the Tuol Koh image bears strong resemblances, and the statuary of Chenla. In fact there were probably some connections with the Phnom Da Style.<sup>42</sup>

Reviewing Dupont's study of the pre-Angkor statuary, Philip Rawson expresses doubts on the dating of some statues.<sup>43</sup> He believes that a group of sculptures, including the Tuol Koh image, dates earlier than Dupont thought. For Rawson this group is related to the art of Mathura and western India of the 2nd to 4th centuries A.D. He is inclined to consider Dupont's "early Chenla art" as "a parallel and independent development alongside the Gupta work of central and eastern India",<sup>44</sup> while Dupont suggests it has affinities with the 5th century art of Dekkan.

Rawson's views were contested by Boisselier<sup>45</sup>

who, at the time, believed that Viṣṇu images holding a conch shell on the hip were unknown in India until the 8th century A.D. However, in a detailed study of the Hindu gods of Peninsular Siam,<sup>47</sup> O'Connor, on the basis of images recently found in India, arrives at the conclusion that the Viṣṇu from Chaiya is probably the most ancient Hindu image discovered in South East Asia. He has convincingly shown that the Viṣṇu from Chaiya can be traced back to prototypes from the period of Kuṣāna rule at Mathura and the 4th century art of the Andharadeśa. He believes that the Chaiya image should be dated no later than 400 A.D.<sup>47</sup> Regarding the Tuol Koh image, O'Connor, on the basis of his comparison with Indian parallels, thinks that it is closely related to the ancient tradition of Viṣṇu with the conch shell on the hip, to which belongs the Chaiya image. According to him the Tuol Koh statue, which still retains the sculptured jewelry, characteristic of this early tradition, dates no later than the early 6th century A.D.<sup>48</sup>

In assessing the chronological position of the Tuol Koh image, one should remember that in the 4th century A.D., Chinese chronicles recorded an embassy sent by T'ien-chu Chan-t'an, King of Funan.<sup>49</sup> There seems to be little doubt about the connections between Funan and India during this period. Sylvain Lévi<sup>50</sup> and G. Coedès<sup>51</sup> are of the opinion that T'ien-Chu Chan-t'an, "the Indian Chan-t'an", had dynastic links with the Indo-Scythians, especially with the Kuṣans of Mathurā. For K. Bhattacharya, there is no need to doubt the

existence of this relationship.<sup>52</sup>

The Tuol Koh image, with its twisted sash hanging down from the right hip and over the left thigh and its carved jewelry, could be regarded as one of the most ancient pieces in Cambodia. The two features are among the characteristics of the Viṣṇu images of the Kuṣāna period.<sup>53</sup> Therefore it would not be too hazardous to date the Viṣṇu from Tuol Koh to the end of the 4th to the beginning of the 5th century A.D.

### 3. Vat Choeung Ek (Plate 4a)

On the bank of the Prek Thnot river there existed a sanctuary of which some remains have been recovered. It was reported by Parmentier<sup>54</sup> who noted that two round colonnettes and a 7th century stela were transported to the Museum in Phnom Penh. Left on the site were two big round columns, a good lintel and a few other blocks of stone. Dalet<sup>55</sup> who visited the site later could not find the lintel.

The decoration of this piece is principally foliage. The main motif is a "branch" covered with leaves which are cut out and overlapped. In the middle of the branch is a big fleuron from which hangs a pendant.<sup>56</sup> At each end of the branch a large scroll forms an outward spiral. Under the branch are scrolls of leaves. These characteristics are enough to place the Vat Choeung Ek lintel in the style of Kompong Preah as first defined by G. de Coral Rémusat.<sup>57</sup>

Boisselier, in a study of the lintels of this style,<sup>58</sup> distinguishes two main types. The first one, abundantly represented, has a straight, horizontal "branch"; the second, apparently more scarce, is characterized by a flexed branch and by emphasis on the central fleuron.

Bénisti<sup>59</sup> however says that the "undulation" of the branch is not so infrequent since it is also present on one of the lintels from Ak Yom near the western Baray in the province of Siemreap, and also on the lintel from Vat Sophas near Hanchei, province of Kompong Cham which, according to her, could be regarded as representing the late phase in the development of the Sambor Prei Kuk style. She also remarks that Boisselier, despite the curved branch of the Prasat Ak Yom lintel, still considers this piece as forming part of a "variant" of type I", i.e. the straight and horizontal branch type. The Vat Choeung Ek lintel, in presenting a curved branch, would thus belong to the Ak Yom/Sophas series. Although she does not think that this characteristic, at our present stage of knowledge, has any chronological importance, Bénisti suggests that the Vat Choeung Ek lintel be retained in the Kampong Preah style since some of its features can be observed on early examples.<sup>60</sup> Among these examples is one of the lintels from Prasat Kompong Preah itself which also presents a pendant hanging down from the central fleuron; this is considered as belonging to the early phase of the style.<sup>61</sup> Another example comes from Vat Prasat, dated 706 A.D., also in the style of Kompong Preah, though the pendant is absent. Another feature which tends to place the Vat Choeung Ek lintel at the beginning

of the Kampong Preah style is the presence of a monster face. Benisti noticed that the leaves covering the central fleuron are arranged in such a way as to show the face of a monster. In her opinion a lintel which presents a monster face under this foliage form, instead of the real animal as in previous styles, would be placed between the styles of Prei Kmeng and Kompong Preah.<sup>62</sup>

Regarding the colonnettes found at this site, two sanctuaries seem to have existed. Two pairs of colonnettes were recovered but only one illustration showing one of them has been published. It is one of the small pair which were transported to the Museum in Phnom Penh.<sup>63</sup> Dalet, in his notes,<sup>64</sup> did not think that there was any connection between this column and other remains found at Vat Choeung Ek, among which are the lintel discussed above and an inscription dated on palaeographic grounds to the 7th century A.D. In the light of the chronological position of the decorative lintel and the published colonnette, it seems more than probable that some sort of relationship existed between at least some of these remains. The Vat Choeung Ek colonnette presents as decoration a central motif bordered by raised fillets. On the uppermost part of the column is another motif showing hanging swags and garlands. In its form and decoration this piece recalls an example found on monument S<sub>1</sub>, the main temple of the southern group of Sambor Prei Kuk. More recently, in north-eastern Thailand, in the district of Prachinburi, at Vathana Nakhon, a round column, 1.50 m. high, has been

found and dated to 650 A.D.<sup>65</sup> Although he does not think this piece can be attributed to the style of Sambor Prei Kuk, Boisselier agrees that "the composition of this column relates to the art of the 2nd and 3rd quarters of the 7th century A.D."<sup>66</sup>

Based on this dating, it would be reasonable to date the Vat Choeung Ek example to the same period. This date would also be compatible with that of the lintel. And the date of 7th century ascribed to the inscription found at the same site<sup>67</sup> could be considered as another argument in favour of the proposed chronological order.

#### 4. Vat Chum

About 10 km. west of Phnom Penh, Vat Chum still preserves a lintel (Plate 4b) broken in two pieces, and a few blocks of carved stones. It was first reported by Parmentier.<sup>68</sup> Dalet described the lintel briefly in his study of the pre-Angkor lintels.<sup>69</sup>

The composition of the Vat Chum lintel consists of a branch, flat and almost straight, bordered by two plain bands between which are lined pearls which, in turn, serve as a border to a series of motif consisting of ovals surrounded by a series of leaf scrolls and divided by three ornate fleurons, each of which has a small figure enclosed in its pearl-bordered oval. In the central fleuron, badly damaged, Garuḍa may be recognised holding snakes. The other two fleurons each encloses a small

figure, in kneeling position and raising one hand. The end of the branch curves slightly inward behind a big fleuron with a lotus bud on the top. In this fleuron, which rests on a moulded abacus, is seen a kneeling figure, with the hands in añjalimūdra, enclosed in an oval frame and ringed by pearls. The kneeling figure, looking outward, appears to have a jaṭāmukuta on the head.<sup>70</sup> Under the branch hang garlands made of strings of pearls separated from another by pendants having at their ends alternating close and open flowers. In each loop formed by the garlands, hangs a pendant ending with a floral motif and two wavy small strips. On the upper edge of the lintel is a frieze of small scroll leaves.

The big fleurons at each end of the flat branch are characteristic of the style of Prei Kmeng. The presence of the small leaves frieze on the upper border of the lintel tend to place it towards the end of the style.<sup>71</sup> Bénisti, taking the richness of the decoration inside the loop of the garlands as a significant feature, also thinks the Vat Chum lintel would be in the advanced stage of the Kompong Preah style. She observes that, while the flat branch with medallions is of Prei Kmeng style, the terminal medallion with figure, making way to a big scroll, announces the style of Kampong Preah, thus placing the lintel obviously to the end of the Prei Kmeng style.

## 5. Vat Saang Phnom

This is a site located some 35 ~~km.~~ south of Phnom Penh. The Buddhist monastery of Saang Phnom<sup>72</sup> is built around a granite hill, about 30 m. high, emerging from the surrounding plain which is partly flooded during the rainy season. The site is no doubt an ancient sacred place and has been occupied over a considerable period judging from the many legends relating to the area and the high level of the neighbouring village. Deposits accumulated in some parts of Phum Saang Phnom contain ancient pottery dating back to the Angkor period.<sup>73</sup>

Reported for the first time by Parmentier,<sup>74</sup> Vat Saang Phnom has preserved many ancient remains: fragments of a round column, remains of a four-armed male statue, a seated image in the lalitāsana pose, a standing female statue and a badly eroded head. Although none of these pieces has ever been published, some of them, from their description, are undoubtedly of the pre-Angkor period; for example the fragments of the round column decorated with hanging garlands and the standing female statue wearing a cylindrical mitre.

In 1966, during a visit to the site, a decorative lintel and a triple section linga were discovered by the present writer. The lintel (Plate 5) although very badly eroded, is clearly of the pre-Angkor period and belongs to the style of Kompong Preah, having a "branch" completely transformed into a sort of big scroll covered with leaves. In fact the whole lintel is decorated with all but leaf motifs except perhaps the abacus at each end of the branch.

Boisselier's important study of the 8th century Khmer lintels<sup>75</sup> has led him to distinguish two main types which both appeared before the end of the first quarter of the 8th century A.D. By far the most frequent, type I, is characterized by a straight and horizontal branch (for example at Prasat Kompong Preah and Prasat Phum Prasat; the latter is dated 706 A.D.). Type II, less frequent, has its branch "en accolade" with the emphasis on the central or axial fleuron.<sup>76</sup> The principal example of this type is represented by a lintel from Prasat Preah Theat Kvan Pir, dated 716 A.D.<sup>77</sup> Despite this classification, Boisselier stresses that the above distinction does not imply a chronological order.<sup>78</sup> He also believes that the influence of the Prei Kmeng style on lintels of type I had produced three "variants" and a fourth one which could be regarded, according to him, as "la superposition de deux linteaux dont l'un aurait subi la contamination".<sup>79</sup> These three variants are:<sup>80</sup>

- "variante avec crosses et pendeloques" with a pendant under the central fleuron;
- "variante avec guirlandes et pendeloques" in which two sub-groups seem to be distinguishable;
- "variante à guirlandes, pendeloques et médaillons" in which the influence of the style of Prei Kmeng is the strongest compared with the previous "variants".

Another example of type II lintels is represented by a piece from Prasat Ak Yom which presents an important

central fleuron from which originate two symmetrical and distinct elements.

The Vat Saang Phnom lintel, having a central fleuron, each segment of the branch curving outward in the form of an S and resting on a support, does not seem to fit into any of Boisselier's types and variants. The symmetrical elements originating from the axial fleuron do indeed recall Boisselier's type II. However, it seems that the way the Vat Saang Phnom branch curves outward could only be found in a lintel from Vat Kompong Chhnang and not in Boisselier's type II lintels. The Vat Kompong Chhnang example is grouped by Boisselier in a "variante à branche godronnée" of the Kompong Preah style. For the time being, 8th century A.D. would be a reasonable date to assign to the Vat Saang Phnom lintel. A few other fragments of a round column, also recovered from the same site and bearing familiar motifs characteristic of the pre-Angkor period would belong to the same date.

Another piece of sculpture recovered from Vat Saang Phnom is a mukhalinga (Plate 6). This emblem of Siva is rather a big piece (more than one metre high). It is represented in the "conventionalized" triple section: a cubic base (Brahmabhāga), an octagonal section (Viṣṇubhāga) and a cylindrical portion (Rudrabhāga) on which is carved a small human head (Plate 7), just above the octagonal section. The hair of this human head is arranged into a jaṭā tightened at the base by a knot above which fall curled locks. The uppermost part of

this chignon appears to shoot upwards and merge with the frenum of the globular portion of the linga. The god is represented wearing heavy earrings. This emblem of Siva is clearly another example of the mukhalinga which has often been studied by various scholars.

As early as 1932, Parmentier, following his pioneering work on L'Art Khmer primitif, postulated that linga bearing a small face was part of the culture of Funan and thus could be dated to the 6th century A.D. or even earlier. He distinguished two main types of linga: pre-Angkor and Angkor; the former being naturalistic in appearance, the latter more conventionalized.<sup>81</sup>

Dupont, in his important study of La Statuaire préangkorienne, expressed less certainty than Parmentier regarding the attribution of mukhalinga to Funan, although he agreed with the distinction between pre-Angkor and Angkor forms; the mukhalinga being grouped with the pre-Angkor type.<sup>82</sup> Malleret followed Dupont in asserting that these objects were pre-Angkor and would date the most realistic linga, a number of which have been found in the Transbassac area, to the 6th century A.D. or even to the end of the 5th.<sup>83</sup> He classified triple section linga with a lesser degree of realism into a "conventional" form in which belongs a mukhalinga found at Oc-Eo. He believed that this is the oldest of the series.<sup>84</sup> O'Connor in his study, Hindu gods of peninsular Siam, is inclined to support Malleret's opinion and adds that "this emblem [from Oc-Eo] would fit with ease into the late Funan or early pre-Angkorian chronology".<sup>85</sup>

Comparing it with similar objects from Southern Thailand, he suggests that the similarities point to "contact between the Oc-Eo area and Nagara Sri Dharmarāja, or at least to a common artistic and iconographic tradition from which both drew their models".<sup>86</sup>

The Vat Saang Phnom linga recalls a number of pre-Angkor examples among which are a piece from Vat Sak Sampou, not far from Vat Saang Phnom,<sup>87</sup> one from Neak Ta Svay Dambar<sup>88</sup> also in the province of Kandal and a triple section linga from western Borneo studied by F.O.K. Bosch<sup>89</sup> and then by O'Connor<sup>90</sup> who concluded that the western Borneo example could be dated to 7th or 8th century A.D. for it presents sufficient detailed analogies with the pre-Angkor mukhalinga of Cambodia.<sup>91</sup>

The Vat Saang Phnom linga has neither the swelling ovoid top section nor the strongly marked gland of the Oc-Eo example which is believed to be the oldest of the series. Despite this lesser degree of realism, the Vat Saang Phnom example could be assigned to the 8th century A.D. or even slightly earlier since the facial features of the Siva head bear strong resemblances to those found on statues of the Sambor Prei Kuk style. Some of these features, for example the heavy earrings, the rather thick lips and particularly the fact that the god is seen emerging from the Viṣṇubhāga with head and shoulders, while in other examples it is only the head which is represented, seem to point to Cham connections. This should not be surprising since there were contacts between Khmer and Cham arts in the 8th century, as has long been pointed

out. In a recent study of La Statuaire du Champa, Boisselier published a linga which recalls the western Borneo example and thus the Vat Saang Phnom and others.<sup>92</sup>

Mukhalinga have been found all over South East Asia but their relationship, as yet, has still to be established and also, as rightly pointed out by O'Connor,<sup>93</sup> "until more Indian examples are studied systematically, we cannot say whether or not the extremely small size of the face of the Southeast Asian mukhalinga is a specialized feature without precedent in Indian art".

The foregoing examination of Vat Saang Phnom remains seems to add more weight to the hypothesis put forward by Dupont more than twenty years ago<sup>94</sup> and which has recently received new support from Boisselier's study of 8th century Khmer lintels,<sup>95</sup> regarding the relationship between Chenla and southern Champa from the 7th to the 9th centuries A.D.

## 6. Vat Phnom Thun Mun

A few kilometres south east of Vat Saang Phnom is another Buddhist monastery built on a hill, about 25 m. high, the Phnom Thun Mun. The site was visited by Parmentier who reported finding a Viṣṇu hand resting on a square support, a small four-armed male statue made of schist, and a relief showing the battle of a crowned monkey with a buffalo.<sup>96</sup> It is not clear whether this relief is part of a larger one, perhaps a fronton, or

it is just a part of a decorative lintel. In any case the carving appears to be of a rather late period.

Vat Phnom Thun Mun has been built on an ancient site. Monks and villagers confirm that bricks from ancient towers were used to build the main temple of the monastery. Indeed blocks of schist can still be seen scattered under the monastic cells. At about 100 m. south of the hill mounds containing the remains of at least two brick towers can still be recognised. Recently a left hand holding a conch has been recovered. This hand and the one reported by Parmentier probably belong to a human size statue of Viṣṇu. It is from one of these mounds that a peasant, while ploughing one day in 1966, unearthed a four-armed male statue. Parmentier did mention a four-armed male statue during his visit to this site, but the statue which has recently been discovered does not appear to be the one reported by Parmentier for two reasons. First, the new image is made of sandstone, and not of schist as Parmentier reported; second, aged monks in the monastery who still remember the visit of Parmentier in 1932, assert that the statue he mentioned was taken away from the monastery after his visit by another French resident.

The new statue represents a standing Viṣṇu with four arms (Plate 8). The image is placed in a horseshoe arch linking the upper arms and the head of the god to a base which still has its tenon intact. The god wears a cylindrical mitre the upper part of which is slightly larger than the base. The top of the mitre shows a curved profile. Curved eyebrows, short nose

and rather large mouth with thick lips on an oval face, long-lobed ears give a rather strange facial expression to this image. The god is represented holding his usual attributes: bhūmi in the lower right hand, cakra in the upper right, sankha in the upper left and gada in the lower left. The lower right hand rests on a support linked to the base of the statue. Apart from the two lower supports, the stability of the image is reinforced by the horseshoe arch which at the same time supports the two upper arms. The god wears a short dhoti draped around the body and fastened by a filiform belt. White paint covering this part of the body makes a close examination of its dress impossible. A swallow-tail shape flap appears to be hanging down from the buckle of the belt.

In its appearance this image recalls the Viṣṇu from Tuy-Hoa in South Vietnam, first reported by Parmentier<sup>97</sup> and believed to belong to the end of the Kompong Preah style.<sup>98</sup> Boisselier, when studying the statuary of Champa, attributed the Tuy-Hoa image to the ancient principality of Pāṇḍurāṅga.<sup>99</sup> The horseshoe supports of the Vat Phnom Thun Mun and the Tuy-Hoa images are strikingly similar, and so are the two supports under the lower hands and the way the four arms hold the attributes. However, the cylindrical mitre of the Vat Phnom Thun Mun differs considerably from that of the Tuy-Hoa Viṣṇu. Instead it is almost identical with the mitre of a Viṣṇu image from Pechaburi in southern Thailand.<sup>100</sup> The dress of the Vat Phnom Thun Mun image, despite the

white paint covering it, appears to be comparable with that of a mutilated image from Prasat Pram Loveng in Cochinchina<sup>101</sup> which Dupont grouped in a series of images belonging to the late phase of the Phnom Da style. Finally, the facial expression of the Vat Phnom Thun Mun Viṣṇu, with curved eyebrows, broad nose and thick lips, recalls that of Cham statuary. If local tradition in the village near Phnom Thun Mun could be taken into account, it is worth noting that villagers of the area maintain that this statue represents a Cham god. This would not be surprising if one remembers that some dynastic links were established between rulers of Champa and Chenla in the 7th century A.D.<sup>102</sup> In fact Dupont thought that Pāṇḍurāṅga had been part of Funan at one time<sup>103</sup> while Boisselier prefers to see this southern province of Champa as an autonomous principality.<sup>104</sup>

Whatever the historical context, the Vat Phnom Thun Mun image, stylistically, bears strong resemblances with Cham images. It would seem reasonable to date this statue to the end of the Kompong Preah style despite some early features such as the treatment of the dress.

## 7. Tuol Kuhea

This is a pre-Angkor site discovered in 1966 and reported by Mr Claude Jacques, in the district of Koh Thom, province of Kandal, in southern Cambodia.

It is situated a few kilometres from the Bassac river. The present writer was able to learn from the villagers of the Phum Kompong Phkol, the closest village to the site, that they still recall that Tuol Kuhea, literally "the mound of the cave" or "the cave mound", used to be linked with Phnom Da and Angkor Borei, about seven kilometres away to the west, by a roadway.

Tuol Kuhea is a large mound covered with a thick bamboo grove. A depression around the site gives the impression that there existed a surrounding moat. On the site, outcrops of bricks are seen at many places. The archaeological material found at Tuol Kuhea consists of two lintels, two inscriptions, fragments of two linga and two reworked images representing four-armed gods which appear to be standing on a bird resembling a peacock. The two lintels were published by Madeleine Giteau in 1967<sup>105</sup> and studied in detail by Jean Boisselier.<sup>106</sup> Mireille Benisti, in her series of research on early Khmer art, also discusses the Tuol Kuhea remains.<sup>107</sup>

The first lintel (Plate 9), says Giteau, belongs to the style of Prei Kmeng which is generally believed to cover the second half of the 7th century A.D. Although it is badly eroded, a number of details can still be recognised. The lintel shows a flattened, almost straight "arch" or "branch" bordered by a pearl motif and plain, narrow bands. On the arch, three medallions, surrounded by a leaf motif, are placed between two scrolls, curving inward.<sup>108</sup> These rather unusual big scrolls tend to stress the division of the already segmented arch. At

each end of this principal motif is a big fleuron supported by an abacus with an applied small fleuron and showing a monster head,<sup>109</sup> apparently mounted by a figure wearing a conical hairdress and heavy earrings; the hands are joined together in añjalimūdra. The figure emerges from a foliage background. Just below the main arch is another one with its scroll leaf ends turning towards the inside. From this are hung garlands with floral pendants separating each loop, inside which are small leaves. From the bottom of each loop is seen a small floral pendant which appears to be the extension of the small leaves inside the loop.

Boisselier, basing his argument on the presence of the monster face which, according to him, recalls the Kirtimukha on some lintels of the Kulen style, considers this Tuol Kuhea piece as a late example of the Prei Kmeng style and places it in the 8th century A.D.<sup>110</sup>

In her study of the monster face, Benisti, however, sees the problem quite differently. First, she stresses that this motif does occur both more often than has been thought and also in earlier styles. Contrary to Boisselier, she believes that the monster face of the Tuol Kuhea lintel has more in common with that of the Sambor Prei Kuk style than with that of the Kulen.<sup>111</sup> Secondly, she contests Boisselier's assertion on the chronological value of the monster face motif in early Khmer art. By itself, she argues, neither the presence nor the morphological transformation of this motif can be taken as having a chronological significance.<sup>112</sup> The flat and almost straight arch with medallions, big

fleurons on abacus at the ends, garlands with loops separated by floral pendants and enclosing small leaves, are all characteristics of the Prei Kmeng style. Bénisti also takes the leaves inside the loops and the secondary arch, doubling the main one, which curves inward with pronounced scrolls, as indicating the end of the style. The double arch, which at first seems unusual, recalls a lintel from Prasat Preah Srei which also has this motif with big leaves replacing garlands.<sup>113</sup> The Tuol Kuhea lintel also has this double arch but still preserves the garlands with pearly loops and thus could be considered as slightly earlier than the Prasat Preah Srei example. All these details led Bénisti to place the Tuol Kuhea lintel to the end of the Prei Kmeng style, towards the last years of the 7th century A.D., in a transition period preceding the beginning of the Kompong Preah style in 706 A.D.<sup>114</sup> Bénisti's proposed dating seems to fit well with the date, 690 A.D., of the inscription also recovered from Tuol Kuhea and being studied by Mr Cl. Jacques.<sup>115</sup> This new dating would seem for the time being satisfactory. It is worth pointing out, however, that there are some other lintels which bear some degree of similarity to the Tuol Kuhea example. The first of these is a lintel from Prasat Speu, in the district of Stung Trang, province of Kompong Cham,<sup>116</sup> which presents a double arch with figure at the ends in an adoring gesture, kneeling on an abacus and emerging from a foliage background. The second example comes from Prasat Prei Chek in the province of Tay-ninh in South Vietnam.<sup>117</sup> Despite the similarity

of some features none of these examples bears any striking resemblances to the Tuol Kuhea lintel which in this respect appears to be unique in pre-Angkor art.

Bénisti has also put forward a new hypothesis regarding the role and the importance of the monster face in Khmer art. Up to the present, it has generally been believed that the development of this motif was due to Javanese influence at the beginning of the 9th century A.D.<sup>118</sup> Indeed Javanese influence at that stage cannot be denied. Nevertheless, the contribution of early Khmer art should not be underestimated. Following Indian influence, which can be clearly recognised, the monster face motif is fairly widely used in the early style of Sambor Prei Kuk. Bénisti, thus, suggests seeing the monster face, represented on the lintels of the Kulen style (particularly those of Prasat Thma Dap and Prasat Anlong Thom), as a reminiscence of earlier art, elements of which could even be traced back to the pre-Sambor style, that of the so-called Thala Borivat.<sup>119</sup> This would not in any way be incompatible with the widely held theory that the original centre of Land Chenla was somewhere in this area. In fact, Bénisti herself has suggested the identification of Bhavapura, capital of Bhavavarman I, one of Īśānavarman I's predecessors, with the site of Thala Borivat.<sup>120</sup> In conclusion, Bénisti estimates that the monster face motif, in the Khmer art of the 9th century A.D., while receiving fresh influences from foreign arts, could well be a "rappel du passé", the reappearance of an ancient motif which was part of the

local repertory.<sup>121</sup>

The second lintel (Plate 10) from Tuol Kuhea is in a much better state than the first one. Its size and its decoration make it a rather exceptional piece in pre-Angkor art. Usually, during this period, the height of a lintel never exceeds the third of the length. In the case of the Tuol Kuhea piece, the height is almost half of the total length. The decoration too is unusually rich. The main floral branch has its scroll ends in outward curves, this being one of the principal characteristics of the Kompong Preah style. It rests on a moulded support with an applied fleuron and is covered with small leaves. The two larger scrolls on the branch bear some similarities to the leaves on the branch of the previous lintel. Below this upper branch, a smaller one, with a series of applied fleurons, describes a semi-circular shape. Garlands and floral pendants, with alternate close and open flowers at the ends, hang down from this secondary arch and are reminiscent of the Prei Kmeng style.

Giteau, when publishing this lintel, estimated that it was from the beginning of the 8th century A.D. and belonged to the style of Kompong Preah.<sup>122</sup> Boisselier, on the other hand, apart from noticing the proportion and the composition of this rather unexpected piece, observes that it looks more like a pediment than a lintel, although there is no doubt that it is a lintel. The piece clearly belongs to the style of Kompong Preah, according to Boisselier, but with "contamination" from the Prei Kmeng

style. He also thinks that foreign influence, Indian and Javanese, may well have been responsible for the unusual shape of the branch in this 8th century Khmer lintel.<sup>123</sup> Comparing the form of the Tuol Kuhea arch with similar motif of the Kulen style, Boisselier believes that the Tuol Kuhea example was at the origin of the same motif found in later style of Khmer and Cham arts. This problem has caused some puzzle concerning the evolution of Cham art, particularly in the Hoa-lai style which Boisselier places in the last years of the 8th century A.D. Thus, according to him, the Tuol Kuhea example has solved his problem by enabling him to establish that Prasat Damrei Krap on the Phnom Kulen is posterior to Hoa-lai, instead of preceding it and gives more consistence to the relationship between the Cham styles of Hoa-lai and Mi-So'n El.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, he is inclined to integrate the statuary style of Prasat Andet, first defined by Dupont,<sup>125</sup> into the style of Kompong Preah which covers nearly the whole 8th century A.D. This, he argues, would fit well with the contiguity of the styles of Prei Kmeng, Prasat Andet and Kompong Preah.

## B. IDENTIFICATION OF CERTAIN PLACE NAMES

Epigraphical documents have long been one of the principal sources for the ancient history of present day Cambodia. Generations of scholars have devoted their efforts to the study of these documents which however have only been partially exploited by specialists on South East Asian cultures and civilizations. Indeed the late G. Coedès has justly reminded us of the numerous interesting possibilities that can be explored through the thorough study of the available written material, particularly those in the vernacular language.<sup>126</sup>

Research already undertaken along this line has proved to be interesting for it has shed new light on the nature, the degree and the extent of the "indianization" of South East Asia, and in particular the ancient Khmer kingdom.<sup>127</sup>

These studies have not only provided new information on the ancient history of early Cambodia but also opened up a promising prospect for the understanding of some aspects of India at that time. Other approaches, also based on the study of inscriptions, have been used.<sup>128</sup> During the last two decades a number of new inscriptions have been found<sup>129</sup> and a survey, similar to that carried out by Dalet and Parmentier in the 1930s, would substantially increase the number of these invaluable documents. The thorough and systematic scrutiny of these texts has yet to come.

In the meantime an attempt will be made to identify a few place names mentioned in some inscriptions,

found in the southern part of present Cambodia, with modern toponyms of the same locality. The difficulties encountered in this sort of study are so complex<sup>130</sup> that it seems hazardous to undertake it. However, with the help of some recent studies in Khmer philology,<sup>131</sup> it is tempting to try this approach and hope it will prove worth the effort.<sup>132</sup>

1. The first toponym to be examined is cmon mentioned in an inscription from Vat Thleng,<sup>133</sup> a site not very far to the south of Phnom Bayang in the province of Takeo, in a district which is now part of South Vietnam. This is an area which claimed Malleret's attention in his study of the Mekong delta area.<sup>134</sup> In fact, in terms of archaeological remains, this area is no doubt the richest in southern Cambodia. The topography and the numerous remains look impressive and aerial photographs have in fact corroborated the existence of ancient fortifications.<sup>135</sup>

The inscription from Vat Thleng contains no date but has generally been attributed to the 7th century A.D. on palaeographic grounds. It relates among other things the donation of ricefields to Śrī Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, another name of Harihara, which according to K. Bhattacharya,<sup>136</sup> was very popular in the pre-Angkor period. Line 10 of the Vat Thleng inscription reads as follows:

vraḥ kāmratān añ śrī śaṅkaranārāyaṇa ai cmon

which Coedès translated "Vraḥ Kāmratān añ Śrī śaṅkaranārāyaṇa of Cmon". The formula, name of god followed by ai and

a place name, does not occur very often in the pre-Angkor inscriptions in reference to the location of a statue. When it does occur it seems, to the present writer, that it indicates an area rather than a site.<sup>137</sup> Thus the place by the name of cmoñ would be the location of the god which, in the context of the inscription, does not necessarily refer to the idol worshipped at Vat Thleng. Old Khmer cmoñ may be taken as the equivalent of the modern smong<sup>138</sup> which, while being the name of a village (phum), is also the name of the larger area, the commune (Khum) in which that village is situated, a dozen kilometres to the north of Phnom Bayang and about twenty kilometres from Vat Thleng.

Smong is the name of a variety of weed of the reed family.<sup>139</sup> The toponym smoñ thus can be classified into the group of toponyms named after plant species. This sort of name, a priori, is not instructive, either in its meaning or in its location and does not give any information regarding the occupation of a place. However, as Mrs Lewitz has pointed out, these names are interesting in two ways.<sup>140</sup> First, they offer a possibility for a "diachronic study" of Khmer phonemes since they have always existed and thus make the comparison of old and new names possible. Secondly, she believes that calling a place by a simple name according to the local occurrence of natural phenomena is an age-old custom very characteristic of Cambodians.

## 2. Prei Krabao

South of Takeo, at a place called Prei Mien,

literally "forest of lichee", where the remains of a small brick tower can still be seen, an inscription written in Old Khmer and dated 648 Śaka (726 A.D.) was found.<sup>141</sup> It contains the records of ricefields and servants given to the god of that shrine, Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa (Harihara), by two officials. Among the names of various ricefields offered is sre vraī kalpau (line 3), "the ricefield of the forest of Kalpau". The Old Khmer kalpau corresponds to the modern Krabao,<sup>142</sup> a tree whose fruit is edible and which appears to be well-known and widely used by people, particularly in the southern part of the province of Takeo.<sup>143</sup> In fact an important village on the bank of the Chaudoc canal, near Phnom Bayang, bears the name Kampong Krabao<sup>144</sup> which would suggest the relative importance of this plant in the area. Probably the most significant feature of this tree, is the use of the seeds in the treatment of leprosy.<sup>145</sup> This is quite a common disease in Cambodia and was so probably in the Angkor period, judging from many popular stories of various persons, including a king, being affected by it.<sup>146</sup>

The fact that an important agglomeration is named after this plant and in an area where the abundance of pre-Angkor and Angkor remains cannot be too strongly emphasized, seems to be more than a coincidence. It is therefore tempting to presume that the sre vraī kalpau in the Prei Mien inscription was somewhere in the area around the modern Kompong Krabao.

### 3. Pās

This is a word which occurs three times in pre-Angkor inscriptions. On K.44, A, line 12, we read

travāñ pās khmauhv and on B, line 1, travāñ pās tāñ kanmeñ.

Pās in these occurrences was interpreted by Coedès as the title of a junior official.<sup>147</sup> Reservoirs are often

named after persons. Travāñ pās khmauhv and travāñ pās tāñ kanmeñ were therefore translated as "the reservoir of Pās Khmauhv" and "the reservoir of Pās Kanmeñ".

However in modern Khmer there is a word which is a perfect correspondence for the old pās, namely bas

the name of a variety of creeper of which the leaves are used as a condiment and medicine.<sup>148</sup> It is worth

noticing that this plant is not well known outside the former district of Treang, now part of the province of Takeo. One should remember that plant-names are frequently used as names of places and reservoirs or ricefields in the pre-Angkor period. It seems quite a

possibility therefore that pās in these occurrences is the name of the creeper and that the two phrases should thus be translated "reservoir of black pās creeper" and "reservoir with pās creeper of Tāñ Kanmeñ";<sup>149</sup> K. 560,

line 11, sre pās kandoñ, might be translated as "the ricefield with pās creeper of Kandoñ" instead of Coedès' "ricefield of Pās Tāñ Kanmeñ".

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Dalet, "Dix-huit mois de recherches archéologiques au Cambodge", BEFEO, XXXV, pp. 117 ff.  
"Recherches archéologiques au Cambodge", BEFEO, XXXV, pp. 23 ff; BEFEO, XXXVII, pp. 623 ff; BEFEO, XXXVIII, pp. 435 ff; BEFEO, XXXIX, pp. 326 ff.; BEFEO, XL, pp. 490 ff.
2. Paris, "Anciens canaux reconnus sur photographie aérienne dans les provinces de Takeo et de Chaudoe", BEFEO, XXXI, pp. 221 ff; BEFEO, XLII, pp. 365 ff.
3. Parmentier, "Complément à l'Art Khmer primitif", BEFEO, XXXV, pp. 1 ff.
4. BEFEO, XXXV, p. 45.
5. K. 787, Inscriptions du Cambodge, VI, pp. 28 ff.
6. K. 811, ibid., pp. 63 ff.
7. K. 810, ibid., p. 62.
8. BEFEO, XXXV, p. 44.
9. Boisselier, "Le Viṣṇu de Tjibuaja (Java Occidental) et la statuare du Sud-Est Asiatique", AAS, XXII, 1959, pp. 210 ff.
10. Boisselier, "Le Viṣṇu de Tjibuaja ...", p. 225.
11. BEFEO, XXXV, p. 44.
12. S. O'Connor, Hindu gods of peninsular Siam, Artibus Asiae, Supplementum, XXVIII, 1972.
13. Boisselier, "Le Viṣṇu de Tjibuaja ...", p. 226.
14. O'Connor, Hindu gods ..., p. 39.
15. Dupont, La Statuaire préangkorienne, 1955, pp. 26-27.
16. Dalet, "Notes sur les styles de Sambor Prei Kuk, de Prei Kmeng, de Kompong Preah et du Kulen", BSEI, XIX, 2 (1944), pp. 7-83.
17. BEFEO, XL, p. 492.
18. Dalet, "Notes ..."; On p. 23, he considers the Tuol Ang Srah Theat lintel as the "pièce de base" of the Sambor Prei Kuk style. Further on p. 28 he says: "il ne paraît pas que le linteau de

Tuol Ang Srah Theat soit l'ultime des linteaux du type I" (i.e. Sambor Prei Kuk style, the characteristics of which being: an arch segmented by medallion or figurine often with ornamented and pearly decorated border; hanging garlands forming little arches under the main arch, and two makara heads facing one another).

19. Dupont, "Les linteaux khmers du VII<sup>ème</sup> siècle", ASS, XV, pp. 31 ff.
20. Op.cit., p. 61, note 4.
21. M. Bénisti, "Les linteaux dits de Thala Borivat", AA, XVIII, 1968, pp. 85-96.
22. Op.cit., p. 92.
23. M. Bénisti, "La bande à chatons", AA, XX, 1969, pp. 99-120.
24. M. Bénisti, Rapports entre le premier art Khmer et l'art indien, EFEO, 1970.
24. She takes what she calls "bande à chatons", a band decorated with small rectangles alternated with ovals, present on the Tuol Ang Srah Theat lintel, as having some chronological significance. See below.
25. Bénisti, "La bande à chatons", p. 100.
26. Op.cit., p. 100, note 2.
27. Dalet, BEFEO, XL, p. 492; Coedès, Inscriptions du Cambodge, V, pp. 39-40.
28. Coedès, Inscriptions du Cambodge, V, pp. 39-40.
29. Dalet, BEFEO, XL, p. 492. He got his information from Coedès who must have misread the date at the time.
30. Dalet, BEFEO, XL, p. 492.
31. However, Bénisti's assertion about the appearance of the "bande à chatons" motif which, according to her, does not exist before the end of the Sambor Prei Kuk style, should remain provisional, at least for the time being, until other sculptures have been thoroughly studied and satisfactorily classified, for example the pedestal from Phnom Batep (or Bathe), near Oc-Eo in Cochinchina, which also bears this motif. So far, this type of sculpture has been neglected by specialists in Khmer art. Only recently Benisti herself has presented an important contribution to the subject

- when she published her article on the "Piédestaux décorés", in Arts Asiatiques, XXVI, 1973, pp. 191-224. In it she has outlined the originality of Khmer pedestal since this early period vis-à-vis the Indian models.
32. Dalet, BEFEO, XXXVIII, pp. 440-441.
  33. Parmentier, BEFEO, XXXV, p. 46.
  34. Op.cit., p. 46.
  35. Dalet, BEFEO, XL, p. 493.
  36. Dupont, in his study of the pre-Angkor statuary considers the Tuol Koh image as an isolated case (p. 133).
  37. Dupont, "Visnu mitrés de l'Indochine occidentale", BEFEO, XLI, 1941, pp. 233-254; La Statuaire préangkorienne, 1955.
  38. Boisselier, "Le Visnu de Tjibuaaja ...", AAS, XXII, 1959.
  39. O'Connor, Hindu gods of peninsular Siam, 1972.
  40. G. Rao, Elements of Hindu Iconography, I, pp. 277 ff.
  41. Dupont, La Statuaire préangkorienne, p. 134.
  42. Op.cit., p. 127.
  43. Review of Dupont's La Statuaire préangkorienne, in Oriental Art, 1957, pp. 33-34.
  44. Op.cit., p. 34.
  45. Boisselier, "La statuaire préangkorienne et Pierre Dupont", AA, VI, 1957, p. 67; "Le Visnu de Tjibuaaja ...", pp. 210-226. Through Rawson's and Boisselier's reviews of Dupont's work seems to emerge a reflection of the clash between English and French scholars on South East Asian art history. See for example Rawson's The Art of Southeast Asia, London, 1967, p. 9.
  46. O'Connor, Hindu gods ..., p. 39.
  47. This view is later adopted by Boisselier in his recent book La Sculpture en Thaïlande, Fribourg, 1974, p. 71.
  48. Hindu gods ..., p. 43, note 9.
  49. Pelliot, "Le Fou-nan", BEFEO, III, pp. 252, 255, 269.

50. S. Lévi, "Kanishka et Sātavāhana", JA, 1936, pp. 61-121.
51. Coedès, The Indianized States ..., pp. 46-7.
52. Bhattacharya, Les religions brahmaniques dans l'ancien Cambodge, p. 129.
53. See for example Fig. 6,7, 9 in S. O'Connor's book, Hindu gods of peninsular Siam.
54. Parmentier, Art Khmer Primitif, I, pp. 127-128.
55. Dalet, "Notes sur les styles de Sambor Prei Kuk ...", p. 21, note 2.
56. Mr A.H. Christie thinks that this fleuron may also be a representation of a sacred tree.
57. G. de Coral Rémusat, L'Art Khmer, p. 47.
58. Boisselier, "Les linteaux khmers du VIIIème siècle", AAS, XXX, 1968, p. 107.
59. Bénisti, "Linteaux inédits et linteaux inconnus", AA, XXX, 1974, p. 157.
60. Op.cit., p. 158.
61. Boisselier, "Les linteaux khmers du VIIIème siècle", p. 106.
62. Bénisti, "La face de monstre", AA, XXVIII, 1973, pp. 125, 128 ff.
63. Parmentier, AKP, I, fig. 19.
64. Dalet, "Notes sur les styles ...", p. 22.
65. M.C. Subradradis Diskul, "A trip to the antiquities in Prachinburi, Buriram, Surin and Sisaket", Archaeology (Borannakhadi, Silpakorn University), vol. 3, no. 4, 1970, p. 59.
66. Op.cit., p. 69.
67. Inscriptions du Cambodge, II, p. 121.
68. Parmentier, "Complément à l'Art Khmer primitif", p. 38.
69. Dalet, "Notes sur les styles ...", p. 16, 24, pl. II D.
70. Bénisti only says the figure is "coiffé d'un mukuṣa". See "Linteaux inédits et linteaux inconnus", p. 136. She takes the figure as a representation of Kinnara. However this type of figure may well have been Garuḍa.

71. K. Haksrea, "Essai de monographie de Vat Batumvari", unpublished essay, University of Fine Arts, Phnom Penh, 1971, p. 56.
72. This is one of many toponyms in the province of Kandal whose etymology has yet to be found. Indeed the grammatical aspect of this toponym does not sound like a usual Khmer one. The rigid syntax of the Cambodian language (determinative always follows determined) would make it into Vat Phnom Saang instead of Vat Saang Phnom. But this depends entirely on the meaning of the word saang which, in this context, does not appear to have a satisfactory meaning. Another place name, also inexplicable, is that of the district of Setbo, about 15 km. north-east of Vat Saang Phnom - the second syllable bo of this toponym would probably represent the Cambodian way of pronouncing the Sanskrit word or syllable pura which means, among other things, "city".
73. A trial excavation would certainly yield interesting material for further study of Khmer ceramic of the Angkor period. Some of the sherds collected by the present writer from the site are strikingly similar to those found on the Phnom Kulen.
74. Parmentier, "Complément à l'Art Khmer primitif", p. 22 ff., and also "Dix-huit mois de recherches archéologiques au Cambodge", p. 131.
75. Boisselier, "Les linteaux khmers du VIIIème siècle", pp. 101-144.
76. Op.cit., p. 107.
77. See L. Finot, BEFEO, IV, pp. 675 ff.
78. Boisselier, "Les linteaux khmers ...", p. 112.
79. Op.cit., p. 113.
80. Op.cit., pp. 113-115.
81. Parmentier, "L'art présumé du Fou-nan", BEFEO, XXXI, pp. 188 ff.
82. Dupont, La statuaire préangkorienne, p. 121.
83. Malleret, ADM, I, pp. 379-380.
84. Op.cit., p. 383, pl. LXXXI.
85. O'Connor, Hindu gods of peninsular Siam, p. 24.
86. Op.cit., p. 24.
87. Parmentier, "L'art présumé du Fou-nan", Pl. XIVA.

88. Dupont, La Statuaire préangkorienne, Pl. XXIB.
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91. O'Connor, "Note on a Mukhalinga ...", p. 95.
92. Boisselier, La Statuaire du Champa, 1963, p. 412.
93. "Note on a Mukhalinga ...", p. 96.
94. Dupont, "Tchen-la et Pāṇḍurāṅga", BSEI, XXIV, 1949, pp. 9-25.
95. "Les linteaux Khmers du 8ème siècle", p. 141.
96. Parmentier, BEFEO, XXXV, p. 22. During a visit to the site in 1968, the present writer could not find this relief.
97. Parmentier, AKP, I, pp. 242, 315, fig. 108 B.
98. Dupont, La statuaire préangkorienne, p. 186, pl. XLI A.
99. Boisselier, La Statuaire du Champa, pp. 72 ff., fig. 27.
100. Dupont, "Viṣṇu mitrés de l'Indochine occidentale", BEFEO, XLI, pl. XXVIII B.
101. Dupont, La Statuaire préangkorienne, p. 58, pl. XV A.
102. Finot, "Les inscriptions de Mi So'n", BEFEO, IV, p. 34. Jagaddharma married the daughter of Iśanavarman I, king of Chenla.
103. Dupont, "Tchen-la et Pāṇḍurāṅga", BSEI, XXIV, pp. 9 ff.
104. Boisselier, La Statuaire du Champa, p. 63.
105. Giteau, "Note sur les deux linteaux de Tuol Kuhea", Etudes Cambodgiennes, n. 10, Phnom-Penh, 1967, pp. 36 ff.
106. Boisselier, "Les linteaux Khmers du VIIIème siècle", AAS, XXX, pp. 101-144.

107. Bénisti, "La face de monstre", AA, XXVIII, pp. 119-134.
108. This motif could be compared with the one on a lintel of Sambor Prei Kuk, group South; see Bénisti, op.cit., p. 130, note 1.
109. From Boisselier's drawing, the monster is squatting on its anterior legs; "Les linteaux Khmers du VIIIème siècle", fig. 32.
110. Boisselier, "Les linteaux Khmers ...", p. 136.
111. She gives as example the lintel west of S. 1 of Sambor Prei Kuk, in which similarity of this motif striking; "La face du monstre", p. 131, fig. 1 and 12.
112. Op.cit., p. 131.
113. Bénisti, "Aux confins des styles de Prei Kmeng et de Kompong Preah", AA, XXIII, 1971, fig. 24, p. 90.
114. Op.cit., p. 132.
115. Boisselier, however, thinks that it is very difficult to establish any connections between the inscription and the sculptures which all appear to be of a later period; "Les linteaux Khmers du VIIIème siècle", p. 135, note 62.
116. Lunet de Lajonquière, Inventaire descriptif des monuments du Cambodge, I, p. 179, fig. 34.
117. Parmentier, AKP, I, p. 98, fig. 23.
118. For example G. de Coral Rémusat, "Animaux fantastiques de l'Indochine", BEFEO, XXXV, p. 433.
119. Bénisti, "Les linteaux dits de Thala Borivat", AA, XVIII, 1968, pp. 85-96.
120. Op.cit., pp. 95-96.
121. Bénisti, "La face de monstre", p. 134.
122. Giteau, "Note sur les deux linteaux de Tuol Kuhea", p. 37.
123. Boisselier, "Les linteaux Khmers du VIIIème siècle", p. 137.
124. Boisselier, "Les linteaux Khmers ...", p. 142.
125. Dupont, La Statuaire préangkorienne, p. 166, 180 ff.

126. Coedès, "L'Avenir des études Khmeres", Compte-rendu de l'Académie des Inscriptions et de Belles-lettres, 1960, p. 367; and also "Some problems in the ancient history of the Hinduized states of South East Asia", Papers on Early South East Asian History, Edited by C. Jack Hinton, Singapore, 1964, pp. 2, 4.
127. See for example:  
 K. Bhattacharya, Les religions brahmaniques dans l'ancien Cambodge, Paris, 1961;  
 K. Bhattacharya, "Recherches sur le vocabulaire des inscriptions sanskrites du Cambodge", BEFEO, LIII, pp. 1-72;  
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 S. Sahai, Les institutions politiques et l'organisation administratives du Cambodge ancien (VI-XIII siècles), Paris 1970.
128. S. Lewitz, "La toponymie Khmère", BEFEO, LIII, 1967, pp. 375-450;  
 O.W. Wolters, "North-western Cambodia in the seventh century", BSOAS, XXXVII, 2, 1974, pp. 355-384;  
 M. Osborne, "Notes on early Cambodian provincial history", France-Asie, n. 186, 1966, pp. 433-449.
129. Cl. Jacques, "Supplément automne VIII des inscriptions du Cambodge", BEFEO, LVIII, 1971, pp. 177-195.
130. These problems are well discussed by S. Lewitz in her doctoral thesis La Toponymie Khmère.
131. These are principally the series of articles by Mr Au-Chhieng, "Etudes de philologie Indo-Khmère" and Mrs S. Lewitz, "Recherches sur le vocabulaire Cambodgien", published in the Journal Asiatique.
132. Examples of ancient place names mentioned in inscriptions and corresponding to present day names are very rare. However there are a few examples to show that this persistence does occur.  
 1. Prasat Trapeang Repou, a group of three towers, in the province of Siemreap. The inscription (K. 690) relates the gift of a piece of land to the god of a place called travañ rvau, which is the ancient correspondence of the modern Trapeang Repou. See Coedès, IC, VII, p. 91.  
 2. Prasat Choeung Ang, north-east of Banteay Prei Nokor, in the province of Kompong Cham.

- K. 99, dated 844 Saka (922 A.D.), doorjamb north, line 2-3, vrah kamrateñ añ śrī tribhuvanaikanatha ay jeñ oñ. See Coedès, IC, VI, p. 108.
133. Coedès, Inscriptions du Cambodge, VI, pp. 28 ff.
134. Malleret, ADM, I, p. 32.
135. Op.cit., p. 29.
136. Bhattacharya, Les religions brahmanique dans l'ancien Cambodge, 1961, p. 157.
137. In K. 99, from a temple north-east of Banteay Prei Nokor, in the province of Kompong Cham, Coedès, when identifying the old jeñ oñ with the modern toponym Choeung ang did seem to imply that jeñ oñ was an area and not just a site for he wrote "Le nom du pays [emphasis of the present writer] ... Jeñ Oñ ...", Coedès, IC, VI, p. 108.
138. The replacement of the Old Khmer c by the modern Khmer s is well illustrated by S. Lewitz, "La toponymie Khmère", BEFEO, LIII, 1967, pp. 394-395. Thus Old Khmer cdiñ, canlyak give modern Khmer sdiñ, sanliek. The present writer, while visiting the southern part of the province of Takeo noticed that there is a confusion in the way people of the area pronounce words beginning with c/ch and s. For example instead of saying [Ch η aai] ជ័យ chñay, [ch η aɿ] ជ័យ Chñañ', they say [s η aai] and [s η aɿ]. This pronunciation can still be heard in the neighbouring district of Tani in the present province of Kampot.
139. Dictionnaire Cambodgien, II, Phnom Penh, 1968, p. 1461.
140. Lewitz, "La toponymie Khmère", p. 409.
141. Aymonier, Le Cambodge, I, p. 170.
142. Another example of the change of this type is Old Khmer Kalmon, modern Khmer Kramuon.
143. Dictionnaire Cambodgien, I, Phnom Penh, 1967, p. 75; M. Martin, Introduction à l'ethnobotanique du Cambodge, Paris, 1971, p. 66. She identifies Krabao as Hydnocarpus anthelminthica Pierre ex Laness; A. Petelot, Les plantes médicinales du Cambodge, du Laos et du Vietnam, I, Paris, 1952, pp. 78-79.
144. Aymonier, Le Cambodge, I, map facing p. 160.

145. See for instance E. Teston and M. Percheron, Le Cambodge moderne, 1931, p. 394 and also M. Martin, Introduction à l'ethnobotanique du Cambodge, 1971, p. 66.
146. For example the story of the Leper King at Angkor where a place is named the Terrace of the Leper King.
147. Coedès, IC, II, p. 12, note 5.
148. Dictionnaire Cambodgien, I, p. 570;  
S. Tardart, Dictionnaire Cambodgien-Français, 2nd partie, Phnom-Penh, 1935, p. 1406;  
Vidal, Martel, Lewitz, "Notes ethnobotaniques sur quelques plantes en usage au Cambodge", BEFEO, LV, 1969, p. 193, Coccinia Cordifolia (L.) Cogn.;  
M. Martin, Introduction à l'ethnobotanique du Cambodge, p. 117, in which she identifies bas as Coccinia iudica Wight et Arn., and adds that it is synonymous to Coccinia cordifolia (L.) Cogn.
149. The fact that this plant grows near the edge of patches of water seems to strengthen this interpretation.

### CONCLUSION

The present survey of the southern provinces of Cambodia in the pre-Angkor period which consists mainly of a reexamination of some of the archaeological material available, does not provide as much new information as anticipated. However, it seems to throw some new light on the early period of present day Cambodia.

For the ancient kingdom of Funan, recent investigations, mainly of a philological nature, seem to show that the peoples who occupied this part of South East Asia in the early centuries of the Christian era, were probably of Mon-Khmer origin, although it is likely that other groups, particularly Austronesian speaking people, were also among the inhabitants of Funan.

From the examination of early lintels of the Sambor Prei Kuk and Prei Kmeng styles, it appears that certain details, particularly the high abacus supporting the motif at the end of the "arch/branch", be it a makara or a scroll, strongly suggest Cham origin. In the statuary, furthermore, artistic influence which could not have come from anywhere but Champa, is also present. The polygonal mitre worn by some Viṣṇu images may have been adopted from Champa, although connections with the arts of Java and of the area around the Gulf of Siam cannot be ruled out. It also appears, from the examination of mukhalinga, that a definite cultural link between different parts of the area, sometimes called the "Mediterranean

sea of South East Asia", was maintained and which would help to explain a strong degree of similarity in certain aspects of the arts of these early "hinduized" states of South East Asia. The importance of these reciprocal relationships between the neighbouring countries of South East Asia should always be kept in perspective if a complete picture of the art history of this early period is to be obtained. However, one should not forget that Chinese influence, which seems to be often underestimated, had also played a major role in the history of these early South East Asian states, although it may not be apparent in the artistic sphere.

It is to be hoped that future investigations, in particular fieldwork and systematic exploration and excavation, could be undertaken, not only in Cambodia, but also in other parts of South East Asia, both mainland and islands, where vast amounts of material still have to be unearthed, so that one day the history of this area may be satisfactorily written.

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- AA            Arts Asiatiques, Musée Guimet, Paris.
- AAS           Artibus Asiae, Ascona.
- AP            Asian Perspectives, Hong Kong.
- BEFEO        Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient,  
Paris.
- BSEI         Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises,  
Saigon.
- BSOAS        Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African  
Studies, London.
- JA            Journal Asiatique, Paris.
- JGIS         Journal of the Greater India Society, Calcutta.
- JSS           Journal of the Siam Society, Bangkok.
- JRAS         Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, London.
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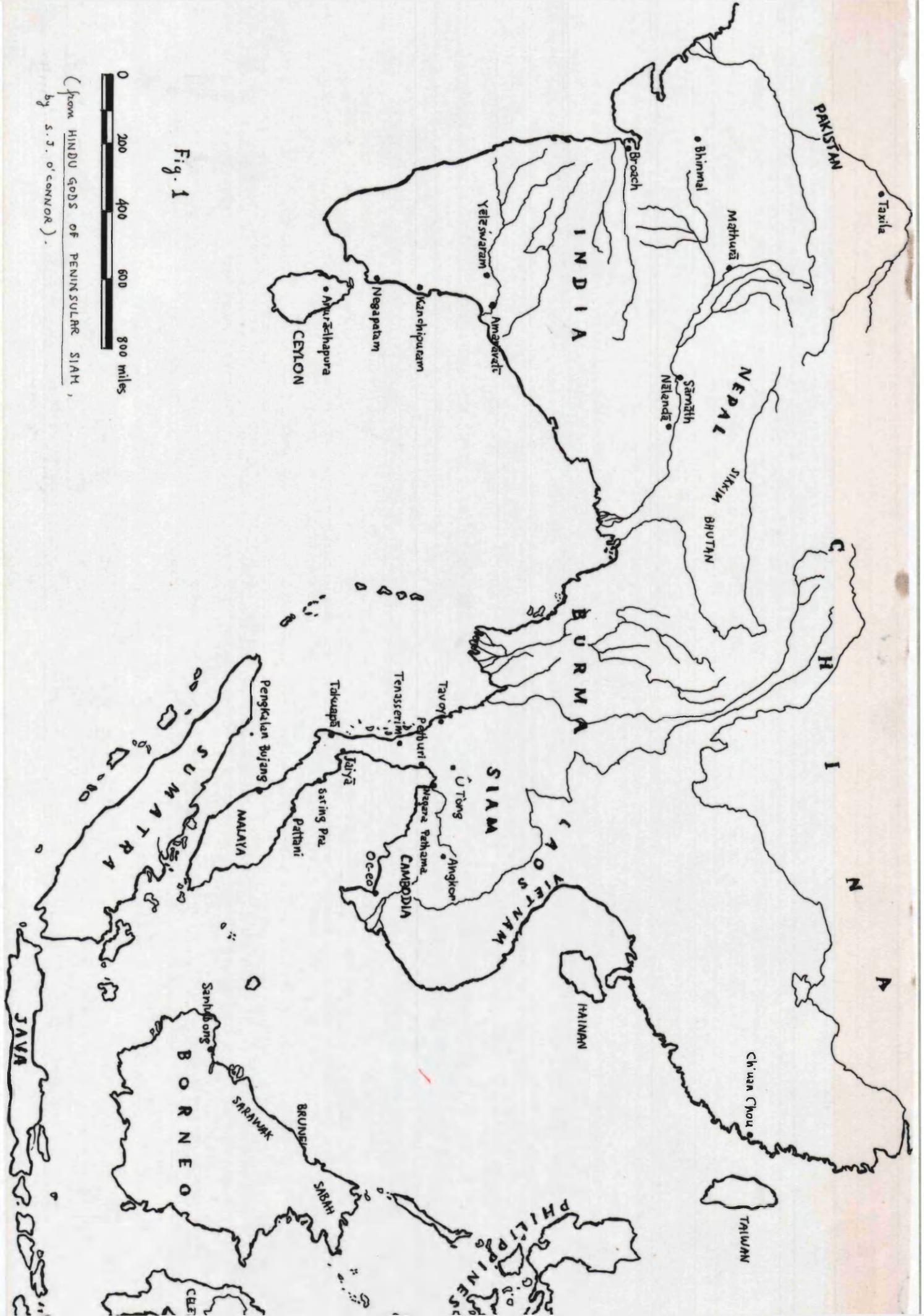


Fig. 1

(from HINDU GODS OF PENINSULAR SIAM,  
by S. J. O'CONNOR).

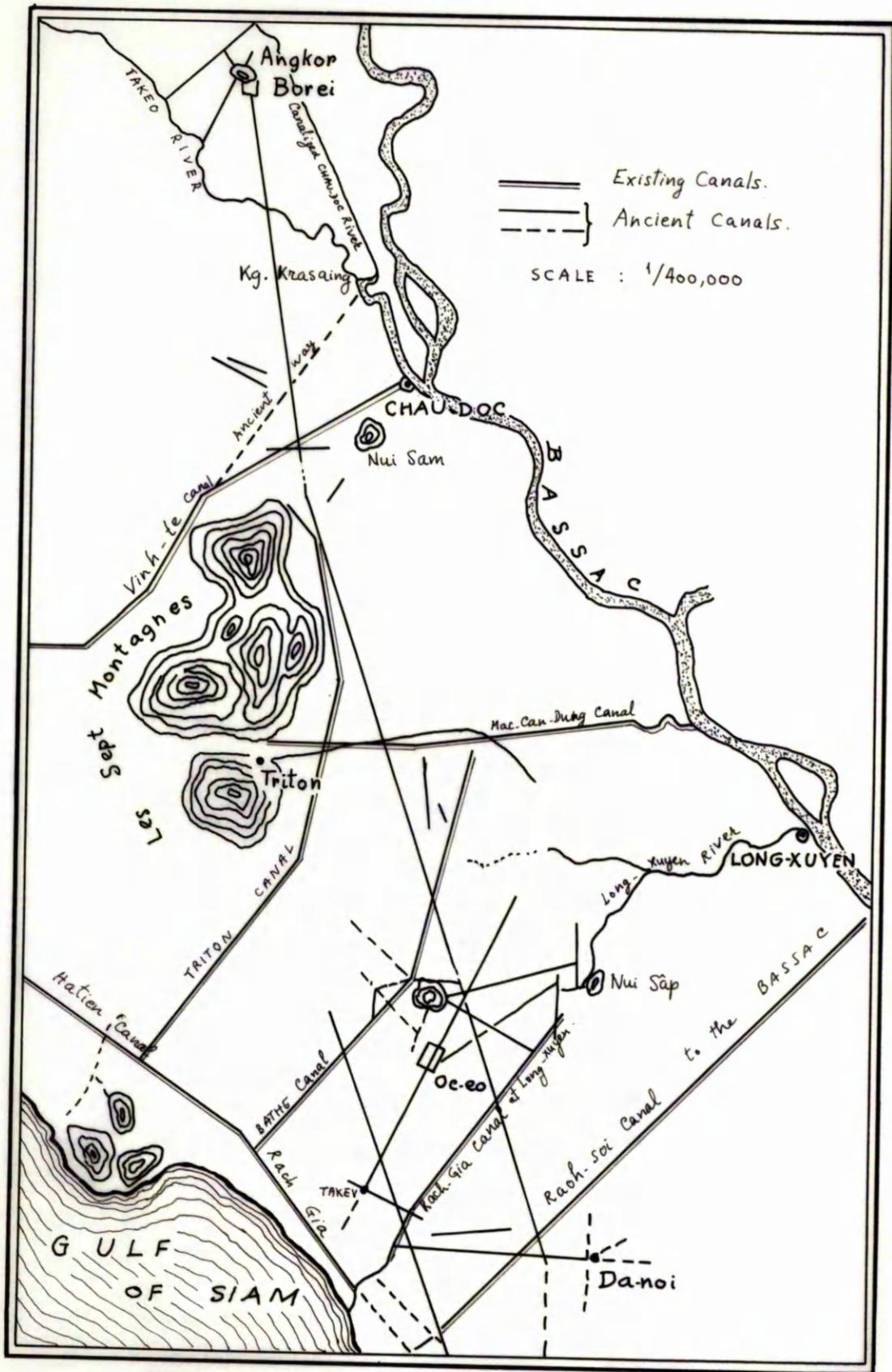


Fig.2 - Oc-Eo and its surroundings. (From ADM, I, Plates).

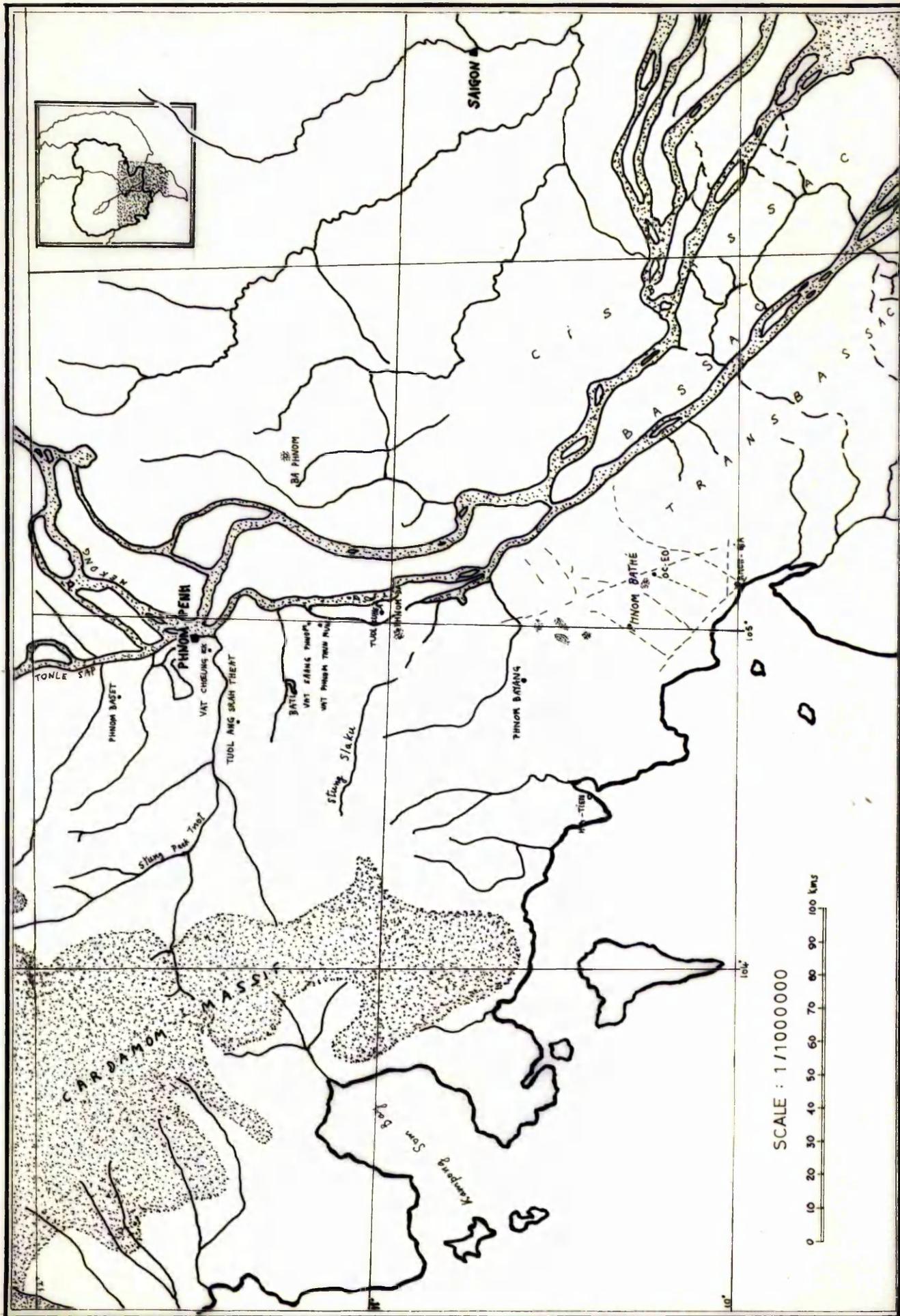
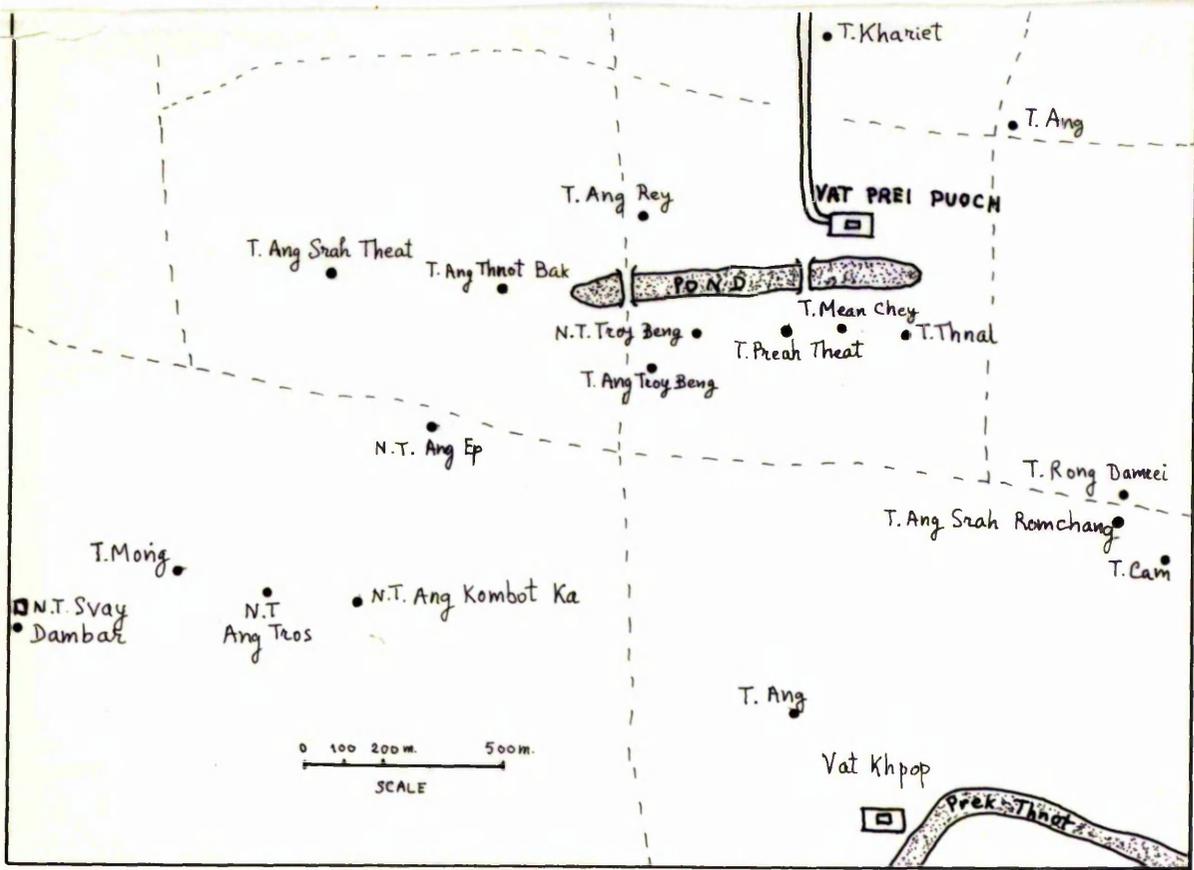


Fig. 3 - SOUTHERN PART OF CAMBODIA

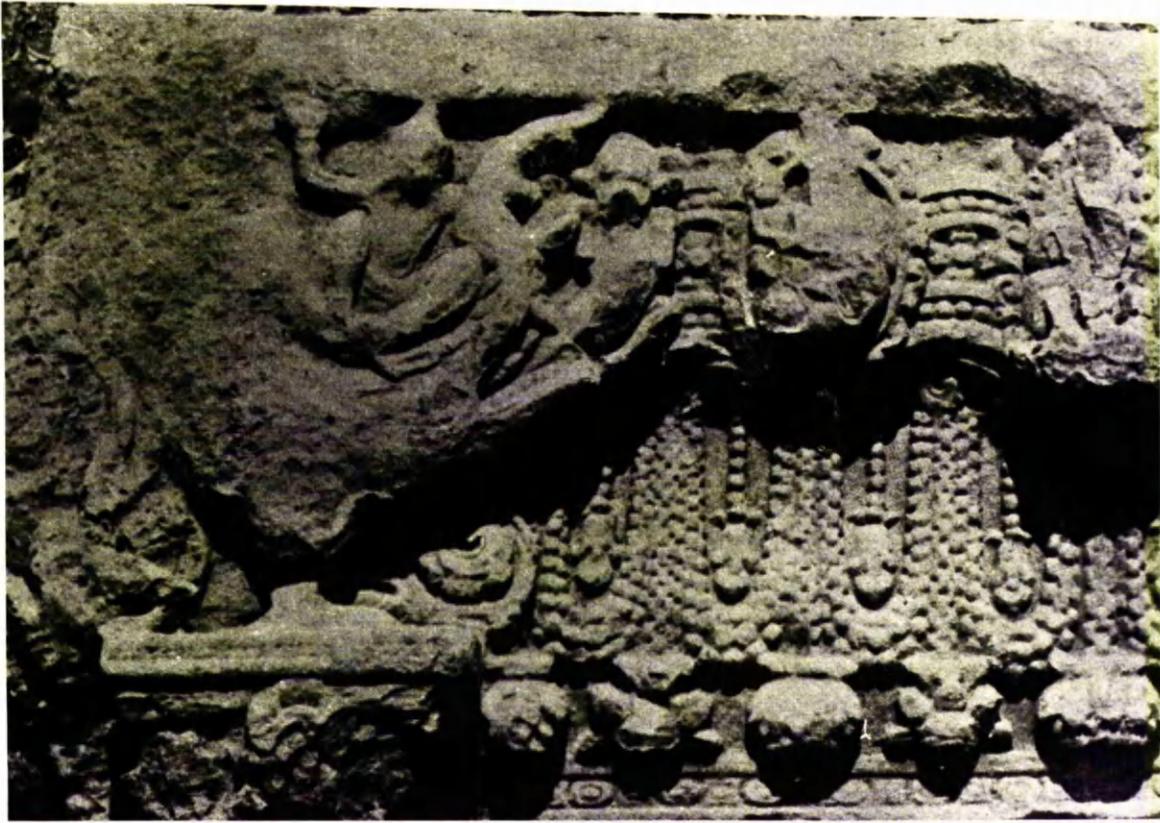


N.T. = Neak Ta; T. = Tuol. — Fig. 4. VAT PREI PUOCH AREA  
 (from BEFEO, XL, 1940, p. 491).

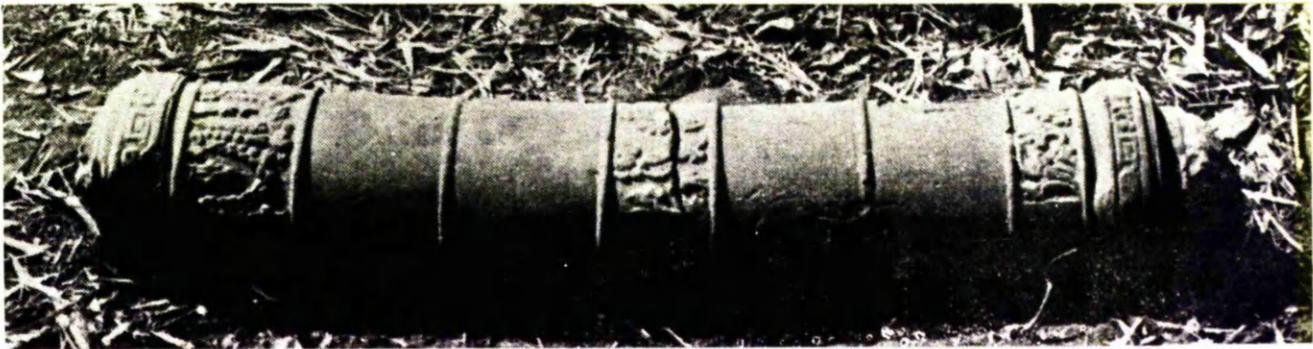


Visnu (?) - Tuol Ang Srah Romchang (Kg. Speu).

( From BEFEO XXXV , Pl. II A )



a - Lintel. Tuol Ang Srah Theat (Kandal).  
( From BEFEO XL, Pl. LIV C )



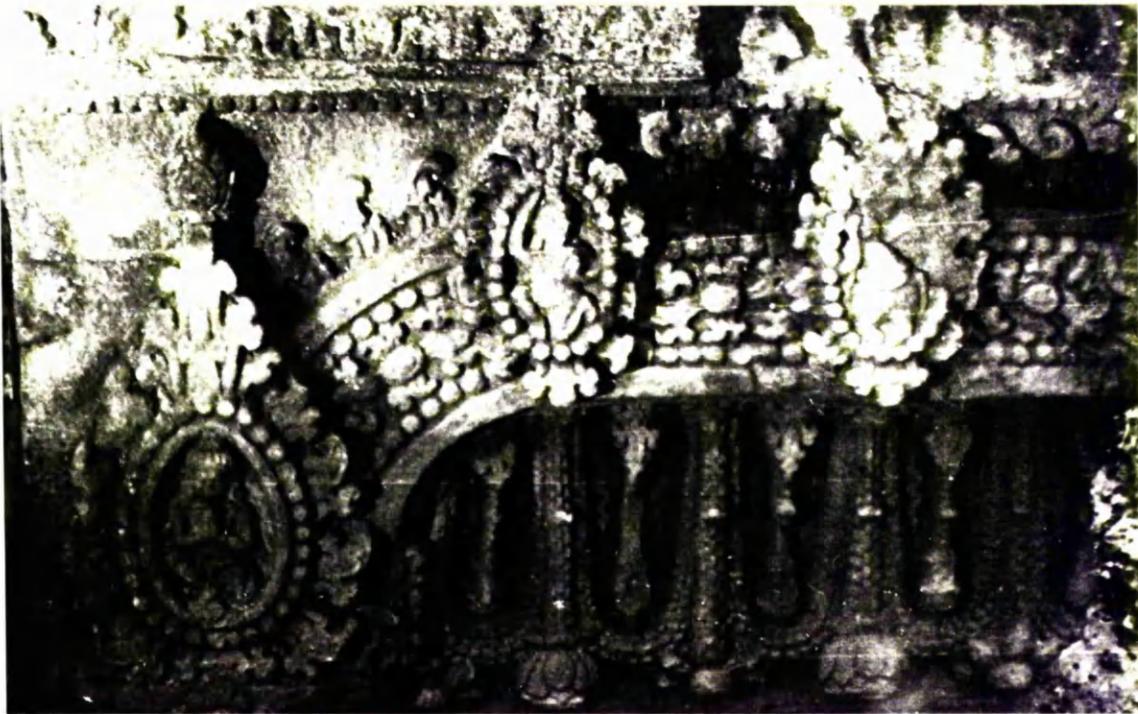
b - Fragment of colonnette. Tuol Ang Srah Theat.  
( From BEFEO XL, Pl. LIV A )



Visnu (?). Tuol Koh (Takeo).  
(From LA STATUAIRE PREANGKORIENNE, Pl. XXIII A )



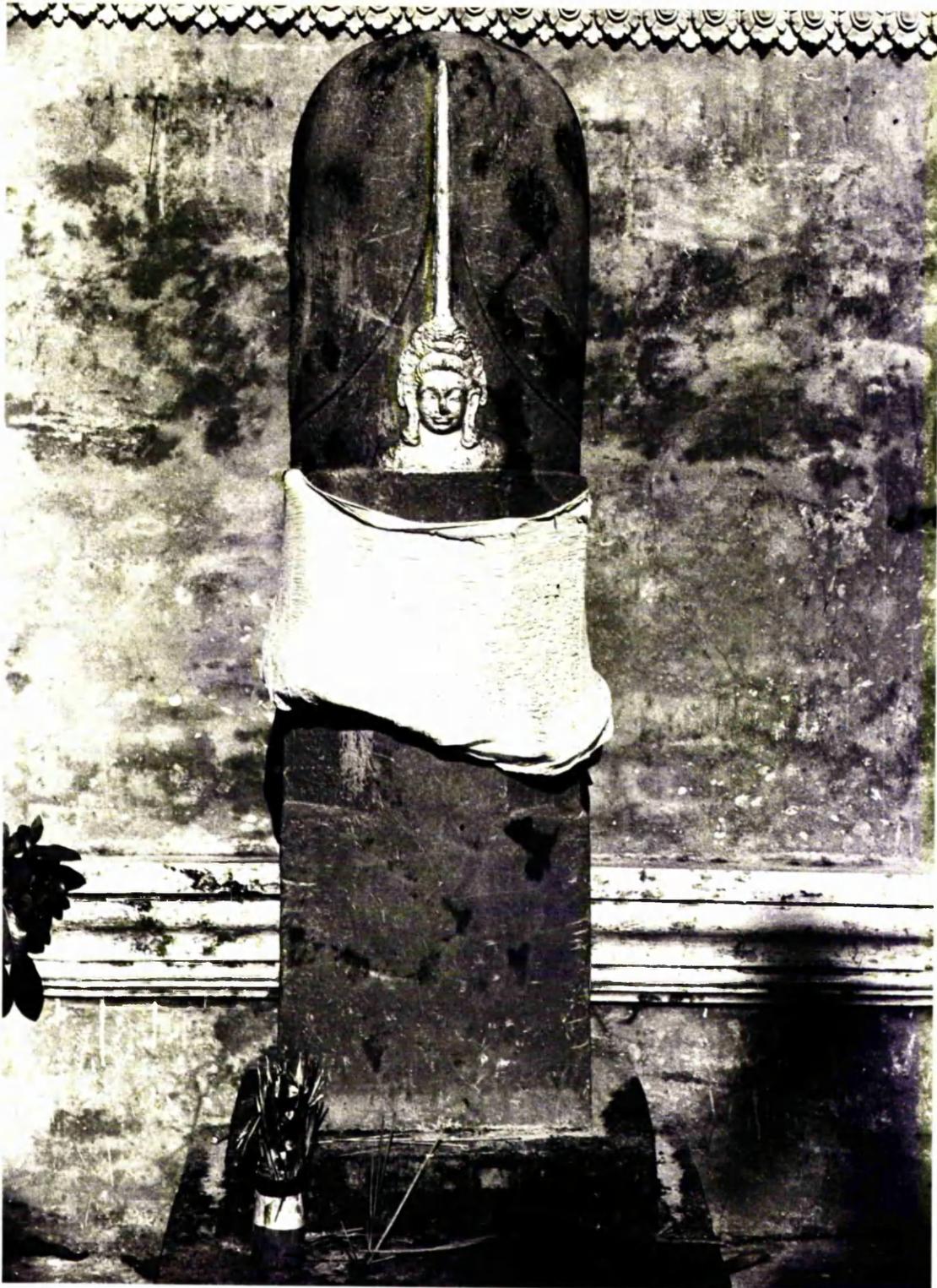
a - Lintel. Vat Choeung Ek (Kandal).  
(From ARTS ASIATIQUES, XXX)



b - Lintel. Vat Chum (Kandal).  
(From ARTS ASIATIQUES, XXX)



LINTEL . VAT SAANG PHNOM (KANDAL).



Mukhalinga. Vat Saang Phnom (Kandal).



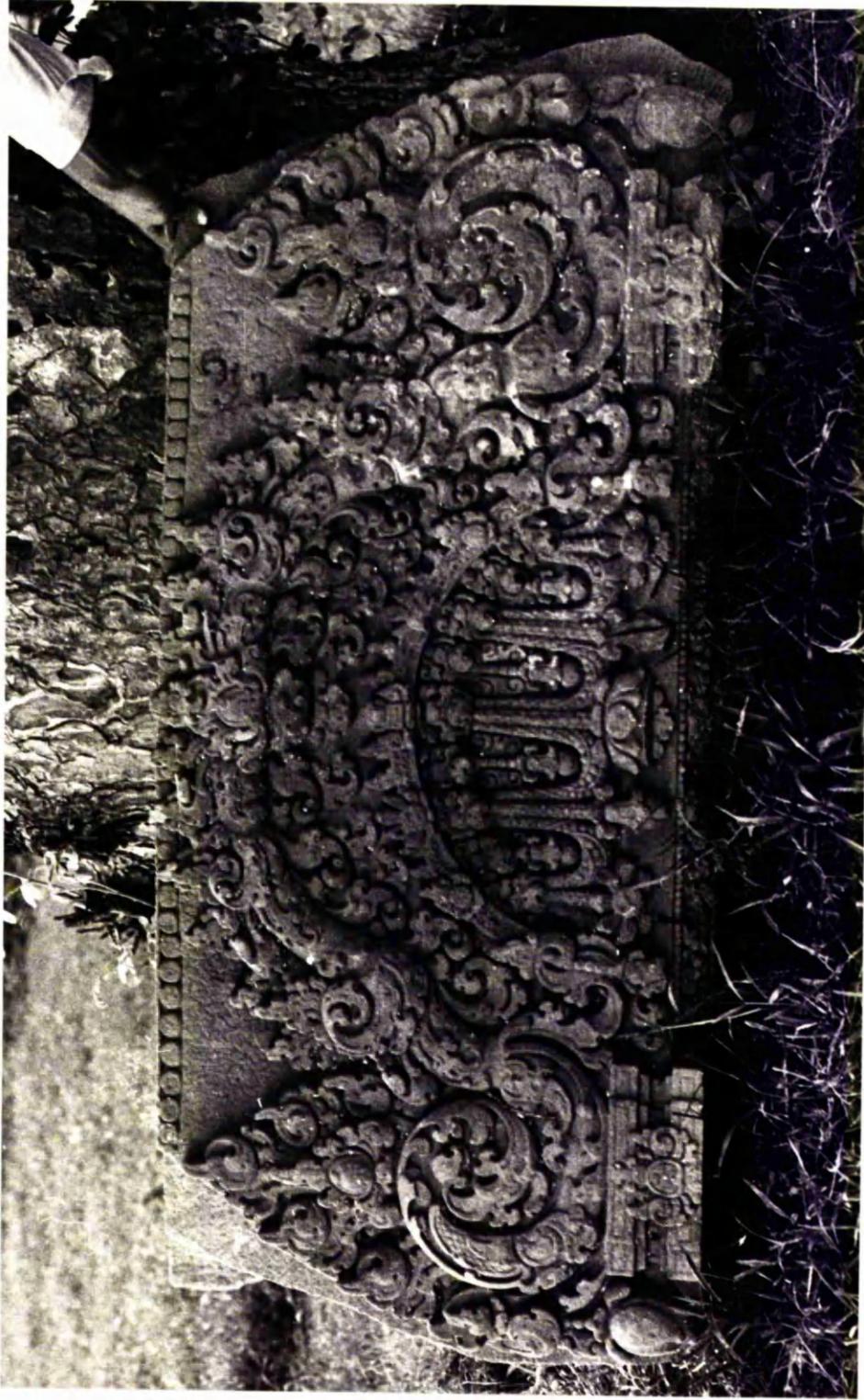
Mukhalinga. Detail.  
Vat Saang Phnom (Kandal).



Visnu. Vat Phnom Thun Mun (Kandal).



LINTEL. TUOL KUHEA (KANDAL).



LINTEL • TUOL KUHEA (KANDAL).