

Bakong Towers

It is believed that these large towers were erected before or during the construction of the colossal temple pyramid of Bakong that had been initiated by Indravarman I at Hariharalaya. Then in 801-802 king, Jayavarman II descended with his court from the Kulen Mountain making Hariharalaya his capital city. The Bakong pyramid temple was started around the beginning of the 7th and completed about the end of the following century.

The Bakong pyramid was made of laterite blocs over the earth mound of a pre-existing hill. It was later covered with sandstone slabs by Indravarman I and others and perhaps inaugurated by Jayavarman II at the end of the 9th century, and none of them was finished. All around the pyramid to be, 18 brick towers were constructed and finished only to the east with the pretence of showing the temple completed (Glaize1993: 250).

The Bakong towers are interesting because they were built with their style, after those of the “Kulen Style” with a new technique locally invented, consisting in adding plaster to previously carved elements in the brick walls, especially by modelling and detailing to make realistic and artistic figures. Workshops were producing artists who with masterly strokes finished carving the lintels, eventually covering all by a whitewash.

Interestingly each eastern tower has the ornamentation of false doors with a massive protruding knob of a door with the head of a monster (*kala*?), or a man as it was for royal (wood?) door-knobs; the door had delicate patterns in plaster modelled on the entire door.

The sandstone lintels of the tower show the ingenuity of Khmer artists by introducing a central face of the *kala* biting the arc made of leaves and its mouth with 8 sharp teeth and a tong terminating in a three-headed naga.



Tower North-West and north-eastern door with an unfinished embryonic pediment.



Bakong Towers of the second enclosure. Both pictures are of the same SE corner with the first attempt to make a pediment with the new technique popular at Hariharalaya



Bakong Tower North - Door knobs protrude from this false door with ornate colonettes.



Bakong East Tower - Over the lintel, there is a carving of 3 niches in the recessed brick wall presumably for the images of gods, as an initial attempt to construct a pediment.



Bakong southeastern towers . The brick tower with carved stone lintel and cylindrical colonettes decorated with rings. The two guardian figures were finished in plaster. In this tower, there are 2 figures of two men while in other towers there are a man and a girl.



Bakong Towers. The top figure represents crowned male and female guardians (without weapons) carved and plastered on the walls at the sides of the doors.

In the lower picture, the semi-circles profile niche of the guardian has at the top a deep small recess in which were probably carved a dish with a sphere, was probably used for some religious ritual.



Bakong central-eastern tower - under restoration in 2002) has a lintel exceptionally composed of carved lowers. Over the door, in the brick wall are carved 3 shrines, one including a figure of a human on an animal (Shiva on his bull?).



Bakong Tower. This lintel is exceptional being carved with large flowers and scrolls of leaf on which rides a small figure. The arc is vegetal but is interrupted by figures dancing or running away with raised arms. Over the central round, a flower is carved with a man seated in a yoga position in a small trilobate shrine. There is no *kala* but *only makara* with the lion's body and elephantine head raised with the thick tusk that transforms into the arc. This *makara* has a rider holding to the animal's collar.



Bakong tower has a lintel identical to those of the nearby temple of Lolei with *kala* and *makara*. Over the lintel, there is a protruding slab carved with several half figures of crowned men (of a king or the pointed chignon of *rishis*).



Bakong Towers - A lintel carved with an arc made of closely interweaving snakes that have the head composed of three small nagas and the tail curled as a leaf. At the centre, there is the figure of a deity seated on a pedestal that seems to hold with both hands some leaves as wings. Over his head, this deity has the image of a three-headed *naga*, quite an unusual pediment.



Bakong Tower of North--western corner. The lintel is of sandstone with a light carving and great richness of mythic elements. The horizontal arc is bitten at the centre by a *kala* with 6 or 8 sharp teeth, without the tong. Over the *kala* head is a central small shrine containing a deity seated in the lotus position I wonder If this is a reference to sacredness and devotion to a god or a king? The arc splits into two parts (very unusual) each reaching the corners of the lintel, delimiting thus a triangular space where the image of a prancing lion is accommodated. Over the head, this animal has a small figure holding a stick. Over the foliage's row of the arc there 2 musicians to the right and 2 warriors to the left.



The upper part of the lined is broken because of the weak inner layers of sandstone. It reveals a row of hieratic heads of *rishis* over a space carved with flowers and geometrically designed bands.

These complex new lintels described here demonstrate the great step forward of the creative ability of Khmer artists in making lintels that did not exist before, probably supported by a royal sponsorship.



The 12th century (?) Angkorean reliefs of Bakong's fifth level

Having done so much research on the iconography of the Preangkorian, I think it reasonable to look at the iconography of the Bakong reliefs of the fifth level, although they were carved centuries after the construction of the temple and its surrounding towers, probably in the 10th century.



Bakong - The temple as seen from the southwest, with a small portion of the wall that did collapse exposing the laterite first wall of the pyramid (bottom left portion of the picture).



Bakong Fifth Level - The heads of the *asuras* were compared to that of a *Dvarapala* by George Groslier (1931) amongst the sandstone-carved heads of the Museum Albert Serraut (now National Museum of Phnom Penh) as reported by Bunker and Latchford, (2011: Fig.511).





Bakong Fifth Level - residual carving of a frieze with a worshipping shown on a slab of the fifth floor of the pyramid



Bakong Fifth Level – Residual carving of an act of veneration by a female figure to the manly figure inside a shrine.

Having personally examined the reliefs of the 5th floor I concluded that originally when they were complete, narrating events of court life and wars against evil spirits. However, I could not find clues to the date of the carving, like other scholars, but that they were done by Indravarman I or Jayavarman II. The reliefs are authentic and carved on poor-quality sandstone, easily eroded and damaged by the monsoon climate with a period of hot summers detaching carved elements. Possibly further damage was done during the construction of the top shrine for the sacred linga. The original shrine was destroyed but later rebuilt in Angkotian Time as confirmed by its iconography. The unique well-preserved ochre-colour slab is a sign of good preservation and is kept safe from evil beings (*rahu*) fighting similar ones in distance.

It is reasonable to assume that the slabs with reliefs were applied to the walls of the 5th floor and not carved on slabs applied for finishing the 5th level. in place as a tradition in most Cambodia's temples but in a workshop of artists. The images when visible must have represented various events of the same story taken from the *Mahabharata* and *Puranas*.

The Bakong reliefs have been a source of controversy:

1. Were carved on slabs of poor-quality sandstone
2. The carved slabs were added later at the time of the second phase of construction of the pyramid by Indravarman I who had started it
4. Some slabs with carved images were left in the open air unprotected rather than safe in the workshop or in a pagoda.
- 5, When the pyramid collapsed, the carved slabs fell on the ground around the temple adding further deterioration.

The French archaeologist of the EFEO, DrMarice Glaize started a total restoration that in effect was a reconstruction of the collapsed temple, from 1936 to 1943, to rebuild the temple that had been abandoned for centuries, achieving the disgraceful degradation state that we can see now.

Preah Kô

Preah Kô and Lolei were the most important sanctuary temples of the Hariharalaya in the area of Roluos to the southeast of Siem Reap. The extraordinary temple of Preah Kô in the capital city of king Indravarman I, was dedicated by him on 25 January 880 to his predecessor (Jacques, 1999: 195). It is narrated that Indravarman I installed some slabs stolen from the Bakong under construction and that he could have been the main sponsor also taking care of the second phase of construction as suggested by Falser (2006: 69).



In iconography, noticeable is the extraordinary decoration on all six towers, with priority to the 3 in front (see picture above). I can't explore here the remains of painted decoration making the towers even more precious.

The 6 brick towers were placed on a common platform about 1 m high, with a staircase flanked by lions' statues. It was started by Indravarman I, the greatest builder of the Preangkorean period. The middle tower of the front row was dedicated to Shiva Parameshvara (supreme lord), but may also refer to the "founder" of Khmer royal dynasties: Jayavarman II. The front tower to the north of this temple was related to king Rudravarman, while the south tower was dedicated to the divine protector of the father of Indravarman. The 3 smaller towers at the back were dedicated to the principal queens of each king.

There is no direct relationship between the decoration type and the figures of the six towers. This was mainly performed in a fine lime-mortar paste hardening with time but also becoming fragile. There were also lintels, colonettes and doors carved in the fine sandstone and then completed in detail and modelled with fine plaster.

On his arrival to Hariharalaya from Kulen in 801 (hypothesis), Jayavarman II found temples already built close in the Bakong embankment that was being excavated for the construction of the largest pyramid temple to Shiva. As a comment on Khmer Art history, it is to be noticed the reappearance of royal and other sponsorship.

Iconography

At Hariharalaya they were of the beautiful and mature type with a variety of making (bricks, sandstone) and mainly plaster innovation and vitality and some narrative attempts in the art of Hariharalaya, while at Kulen were lintels with heterogeneous poor layouts with simple carving systems.

At Hariharalaya, the new trend of using plaster(lime-mortar) in the temples' decorations revolutionized Khmer art of that time, thus making some of the best lintels of all Khmer art, giving at artists the possibility to release their creative genius and produce (at Prah Ko and Lolei) some of the best lintels of Khmer art of all time and preparing the making of the extraordinary art of Banteay Srei.

To show the gigantic difference between Prah Kô lintels and those of the previous style of Kulen, suffice to look at pictures and the Kulen lintels stored at the Musée Guimet in Paris with elements that may spark the phantasy of observers.

I assume that a wealthy city such as Hariharalaya probably circulated booklets on the decoration of temples and the making of monsters and human figures, in India. They were similar to instruction manuals circulating amongst workshops, allowing them to generate new and ancient motifs. These were reinterpreted by Khmers adding more innovative elements.

Over the lintel of this temple emerges a stone slab, some 10-14 cm probably intended as part of the lintel. It was carved with a frieze of the heads of *rishis*, crowned people, and popular others (Illustrate on the top part of the next photograph). This frieze carved over the lintel of many temples may be an innovation that started at Hariharalaya).

The making of Preah Kô of decoration was composed of carving, plastering and painting of all elements and the time required for the organization of the specialists was probably by workshops) did lengthen the construction time of a temple of the type of Prah Kô, with 6 separate towers. Perhaps Indravarman I did start the towers and 2 years later were finished with the new towers.

the stucco (plaster) details were applied by different artists from workshops specialised in plastering. (Falses 2002). Taking into account the manpower and artistic effort involved in this type of decoration, it is unlikely that Prah Kô was built in one go of time. It was started by Idvarman I and his successor completing only what had been left unfinished.



Preah Kô, the eastern entrance to the tower with 2 massive sandstone steps in the “moon shape” followed by two lions further protecting the access to the door which is flanked by cylindrical *colonnettes* visually supporting the Special lintel, the one that is described in detail in the text and taken as the boundary Preangkorian to Angkorian periods. The ingenuity of Khmer artists in introducing figures in activities brought to imagine some sort of mythological event, a movement as never seen before.



Preah Kô, 2002-2005 — Special lintel. This lintel over the central door of the northern tower's south-facing door was decorated with lime-mortar over the base of the brick wall with great freedom reassuring the genius of Khmer artists. The power of myths or secular stories to generate a special mental attraction is in the upper part of this lintel that I have defined as "Special lintel".

The arc is partially transformed into a soft tube (?) on which there are the figures of riders holding swords or musical instruments, but having their horses magically absorbed into the vegetal arc(or emerging from it). The story continues below with small figures holding swords standing over the 3 naga heads at the end of large curly leaves. Altogether the layout of these figures may originate from a fantasy view in the mind. Magic transformations appear to be typical of the style of this period.

Whatever the interpretation of this lintel, it is full of dynamism and magic and generates an undeniable reaction.



Preah Kô 2002-2005. Detail of the "Special lintel" over the arc.



Detail of the "Special lintel" below the arc. Below the arc, the images of six warriors seem here to ride 3 small-headed *nagas* which is depicted as a large curl of a leaf. They are holding sticks (or swords) at the end of a large leaf's curl. The arc ends in an "S" shaped curl of the large leaves over the capital on which is a small *makara* with a man on its back. The *makara* has the lion's body but the elephantine head with an erect trunk from which hangs a jewellery chain terminating in a lotus bud. (wong hey in Khmer)

I believe that in a rich city such as Hariharalaya probably circulated booklets on the decoration of temples and the making of monsters and human figures, from India. They were similar to instruction manuals circulating amongst workshops, allowing them to generate new and ancient motifs. These were reinterpreted by Khmers adding more innovative elements.

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Preah Kô - Another creative lintel of Hariharaklaya. Here is the image of an elephant with a bent trunk and 2 tasks protruding from the space usually filled by a *kala*. Belo the arc there is a set of figures seated on a large leaf holding the kneel with one hand. The elephant has two small tusks and a long trunk. The upper part of the lintel is dirty and thus difficult to read.



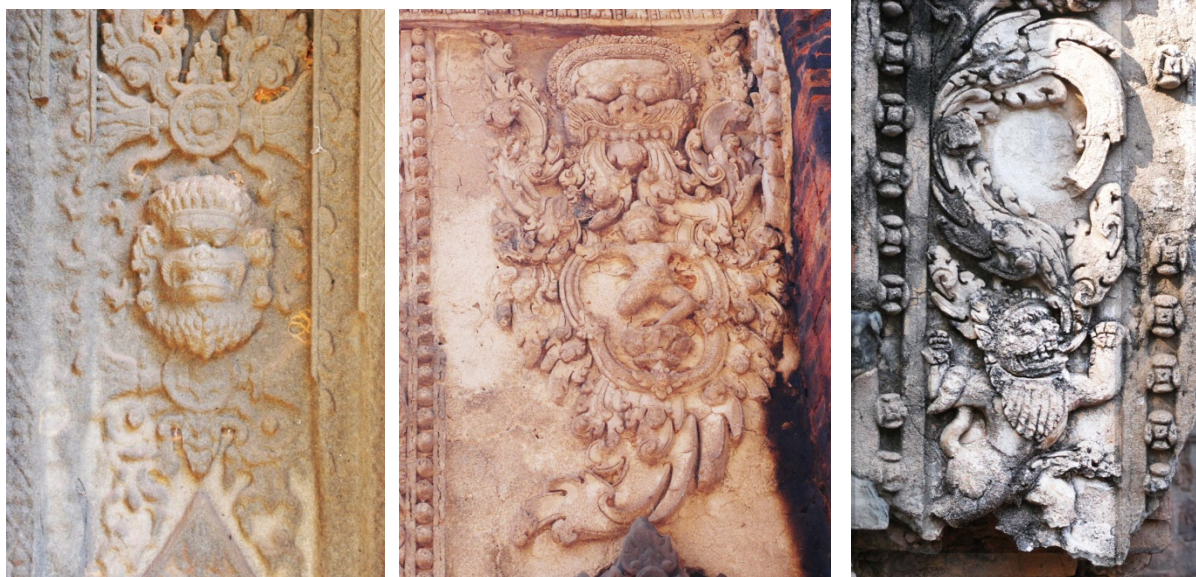
Preah Kô -central-eastern tower. On this lintel, Garuda appears putting together two branches of the vegetal arc composed of flowers or e snakes (*nagas*). The mythical bird becomes important at Hariharalaya, with or without Vishnu.



Preah Kô – A figure (eroded Garuda?) is riding a vegetal arc. All were made in lime-plaster on bricks. Erosion has damaged this lintel.



Preah Kô, 2002-2005 Girl at the window holding a lotus. Bird in a decorative frame. Seated figure in an ornate frame



Preah Kô. Plaster decorative figures on the walls, self-explanatory.

Several stucco decorations were detached from the walls falling like leaves to the ground. In restoration, sometimes full leaves were reapplied to the wall. Motifs like that of the girl at the window were seen at Sambor Prei Kuk, Kulen and Trapeang Pong. The face of the *kala* reappears frequently in the lintels of Preah Kok and Preah Kô.

It is unlikely that the temple could have been built in two years by Indravarman, This opinion ignored a large amount of personnel specialized in building and decorating a temple of the type of Prah Kô, with 6 separate towers. The official building time is doubtful and it seems not to have taken into account the human activity required for the construction and decoration of each tower. The inscriptions are contradictory. Perhaps Indravarman I did start the towers and 2 years later the towers were finished by his successor or Jayavarman II.



Preah Kô, 2002-2005 - Amongst the plaster decoration, there are temple-guardians (*dvarapala*) carved as sculptures in fine sandstone



Preah Kô, 2002-2005 – False door of the second level (floor) with squashed *kala* in the plaster lintel. The plaster layer covering the entire temple is evident. Traces of paint colouration are over the left capital.



Preah Kô. - A set of badly preserved or incomplete lintels with a small Garuda at the centre of the arch that he unites with the strength of his arms. No *kala* or *makara*, but the large head of a *naga* spreads in multiple and double rows of heads. (Photographs were taken in 2002 during restoration.



Preah Kô – A better-preserved pediment clearly shows a Garuda with wings and arms keeping together the two portions of the arc of vegetal scrolls and large vegetal scrolls filling all the space below.

Falser (2006: 158) believes that the stucco (plaster) details were applied by different artists from workshops specialising in plastering. Taking into account the manpower and artistic effort involved in this type of decoration, it is unlikely that Preah Kô was built in one go. It was started by Jayavarman I (?) or Indravarman I. The last king had to complete only what had been left unfinished. Indravarman I may have changed opinion on the ornamentation of the towers. The complete brick carvings were covered by a thin layer of dark *stucco*, with the result that the two surfaces became similar.



Preah Kô. The central figure is of a lion flanked by lions vomiting the arc made of leaves and flowers. At the end of vegetal scrolls that will be hosting horses between pendants of pearls (beads?) ending with a lotus bud, similar to the *wong hey* typical of Kulen lintels with *makara*. (Pilginthorne 2018) At the end of each leaf, there are horsed riders magically absorbed into the arcs as in all lintels of this period. The arc terminates with a cobra head of 5 nagas.



Preah Kô. - The door of the rear north-west tower with a pediment requiring only the mortar-plaster cover around the edges and modelling of the central figure of a god.



Preah Kô. U-shaped pediment with the image of a god carved into the brick, later to be modelled in white plaster



Preah Kô. - a double niche without ornamentation, not as pediment



Preah Kô - The sandstone lintels of the tower shown above show the ingenuity of Khmer artists by introducing a central face of the *kala* biting the arc made of leaves and its mouth with 8 sharp teeth and a tongue terminating in a three-headed naga. - The image of a man on an animal (Shiva on Nandin?)



Preah Kô - The brick building is believed to be a *crematorium* with friezes with *rishi's* figures built several metres away from the temple.



Prasat Nean Kmau of Takeo

This temple consists of two in poor conservation conditions. only one is important for the art history of Cambodia's art for region explained below.

The temple is located on National road No.2, about 50 kilometres south of Phnom Penh in the Takeo province. It is important to distinguish it from the Neang Khmau tower located a few kilometres before reaching Koh Ker. For this reason, the temple under consideration is named **Prasat Neak Khmau of Takeo**. I think that the presumed presence of Vishnu's drawings may have brought Jacques to assume that Prasat Neag Khmau is the twin temple of Prasat Kravan (Jacques 1999: 152).



This temple originally with 2 towers is now included in the Buddhist monastery of the same south of Phnom It is considered from the 10th century at the time of Jashovarman I (888-903). his little know because outside the Angkor area (except V.Roveda, *Images of the Gods*, 2005 : 338)is the only one to visit when going to Phnom Cisor.

The tower to the northeast is the only interesting one for 2 reasons: the lintel and the inner drawings, the read of this tower has a level with the plaster still preserved, including the image of a girl at the window as seen in several Preangkorian temples (Sambort Prei Kuk, Trapeang Pong, Preah Kô, and more).

The marvellous carved lintel. Judging from the joysticks in a vase at the entrance) is highly venerated probably to the cult of ancestors or to Vishnu, although it is included in a large Buddhist complex. The vihara was restored at the end of the 20h century and the statues were all painted with bright colours and gold in the 1980s.



The restored statue of a worshiper
The door has octagonal *colonettes*.



Full view of the tower



The perfect lintel with the head of a *kala* (or Rahu) ferociously biting the arc

The iconography of the lintel is of little interest apart from an extraordinarily clear central *kala's* head (named also Rahu) with an open mouth biting the arc, which is straight ending with two enroled *nagas* with 3 heads. Altogether the layout is preannouncing the Lolei style. The well-preserved colonettes are octagonal and undecorated.

The other importance of this temple is in the traces of drawing on the inner walls. At the time of my visit in 1999, it was impossible to reconstruct the figures which according to the imaginary reconstructions of Henry Marchal n (1955: 153) could see many Vishnuite designs (including Krishna Govardhana). filled with white paint or chalk. I do not deny the presence of drawings but they require a new study. Drawings from small to large discovered at Preah Ko, Koh Ker and other sites are still little known and described.

Lolei

The temple at Lolei was started by king Indravarman I and was completed by his son King Yashovarman In 893 (Jacques 1999: 202). It was originally a temple-island in the *Indratatataka baray*; it has four brick sanctuary towers similar to those of Prah kô dedicated to four gods coupled. The southeastern tower collapsed in 1968.



Lolei - The central and northeastern towers are still in reasonably good condition. The southeast tower collapsed in 1966. All pictures reproduced here were taken in 2002.



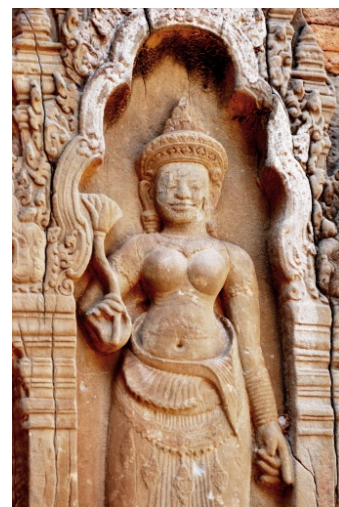
The late Prof 'Max' Maxwell in 2002, looked surprised at the temple's conditions in 2002.



Lolei –The central and north towers were seen from the south in 2002.



Lolei - Male and female guardians. The pleated skirt of the lady is more gracefully repeated at the Phnum Bakheng. Both are carved in polished fine sunstone and later inserted into the brick wall



Lolei -The usual girl at the window holding a lotus bud. **RIGHT** - A crowned lady holding an open lotus



Lolei. A false door finely decorated with plaster mouldings.

The lintels of Lolei



Lolei - Northern tower with a damaged Garuda(1). This is one of the three lintels with the image of Garuda, the mythological king of the birds and perennial enemy of snakes. In the lintel, Garuda is carved in association with snakes.



Lolei – Lintel with a large kala head with a finely carved shrine hanging from its mouth. The arc is much eroded but looks simply made of leaves terminating with a large scroll that ends with an exceptional *makara*.



Lolei– Garuda 2 - *The same lintel with different lighting* - This magnificent lintel is from the southwest tower and is one of the best in Khmer art. It has a prominent Garuda head with bulging eyes and a prominent beak. It replaces the usual *Kala*'s head, but with several small *naga* below its head. The arc is entirely vegetal, slightly undulated, with figures of men riding the arc and also figures arming their bows on each side; below the arc, 4 small scrolls are holding human figures with instruments or swords. The arc ends with large vegetal scrolls. This lintel has a good balance of elements and their layout, plus perfection of carving. Garuda has a crown made of leaves and from his beak hung a three-headed *naga*. The arc terminates into a small convergent curl of leaves. Over the lintel has a prominent slab carved with a series of *rishis* (hermits) in between flower containers with a dancing figure (see below).



Lolei – Detail of the frieze over the above the intel.



Lolei – Lintel with a central flower sustaining a human or god's figure seated in a small shrine. On the arc, there are half figures of men with raised arms (singing a hymn to the god?). The figures are with the lower body's part absorbed into the arc. This life-giving to the arc will continue in the Angkorian period.



Lolei - Central tower –lintel with the central figure of a single elephant's head with a long trunk and 2 Broken tusks. On the open head of the gigantic animal, there is an eroded unidentifiable figure (Indra?) in a small shrine. The lintel is made of snakes in two sections interrupted by the elephant's head displays small human figures holding a spear. The arc is made of undulated snakes eating each other in the middle of a bend, before terminating the arc with a lathe cobra open with 3 heads at least 3 heads sustaining a small dancing figure.



Lolei, detail of the above.



Lolei - The western-face door of the central tower. The door's very ornate polygonal single colonette (one missing) was sustaining a sandstone lintel with Garuda interwoven with the ac made of two types of vegetables. Over the lintel and its prominent carved slab a sort of pediment there is a coarsely carved shrine containing the form of a figure of an animal, probably the carrier of Shiva.



Lolei – This lintel differs from the previous one in having the arc made of leaves and not snakes, terminating in a large single-leaf divergent large curl containing the upper body of a crowned *naga*. Furthermore, the Garuda is without a crown and from his back hangs a round fruit with leaves



Lolei – the enlarged head of Garuda with bulging eyes and a crown of leaves, possibly to replace the equally frightening *Kala's* head.

NOTE - The abundance of images of Garuda on Lolei's lintels may indicate a special relationship to the worship of Vishnu. Garuda is the carrier (*vahana*) of Vishnu. Garuda was a sworn enemy of snakes. In a Khmer lintel of the early 9th century, the combination Vishnu-Garuda may indicate that the King (Garuda) must stop the high level of corruption (all types of snakes) and the need for a firm king.



Lolei - Garuda 3 . Detail of the upper part of the lintel with a sandstone slab decorated here by reliefs made in plaster. They depict a series of *rishis* within a stunning decoration that elsewhere contains images of prancing lions.



Lolei – The lintel with the large elephant's head seen above has an arc made of undulating snakes(*nagas*); one is biting (or eating?) the tail of the other, an identical snake with the head in cobra fashion revealing 3 heads. Around the polylobate edges of his head, there are several figures of crowned men. The first snake's head is carved with two very short arms. The snake closest to the centre of the lintel makes the arc made of two snakes at each side.



Lolei –The detail of this lintel of Indra demonstrated that the god liked the company of musicians and courtiers



Lolei – Indra lintel. Detail of the sandstone slab carved over the lintel. Detail r row with *rishis* in the prayer attitude alternate with a large basket containing unknown fruits and flowers; the third element is that of a narrow vertical shrine containing the image of a man with bent arms and legs. When the ornate slab is seen in its totality, the basket unites the layout in a graceful piece of decoration. This was part of the lintel and probably carved together. Later, plaster modelling was added.



Lolei, detail of the lintel of the monument behind the demolished western tower. It has one of the largest *Kala* in a perfect state of preservation. The image of the *makara* seems to be fighting a large man. Over the head, the *kala* is the image of a god holding a vertical held stick or sword.



Lolei. 2002 – A lintel rich in images of snakes. The undulated arc is part vegetal and part snake. At the centre of the arc there is an unusual image of a Kala with human features. The monster has a large open mouth from which exits a rough narrow tongue terminating in the three-headed crowned *nagas*

Over and under the arc there are men with an arm raised holding a spear and also small bunches of leaves or flowers. The arc terminates at both ends with a thick extroverted vegetal curl over the pedestal of the *colonettes*. Over the lintel, there is a heavy plinth carved with geometric forms. The arc terminates into a large vegetal scroll (see the previous photograph). The large arms holding a rope designed around the head and tongue belong to the two *naga* that becomes the ends of the arc.



Lolei 2002 - Detail of lintels with Kala's head with a crown and a long tongue coming out of its mouth, decorated with patterns that end in three small *nagas*. At the sides of the monster's arms, embracing a pendant that frames his tongue with vegetal and geometrical scrolls filling the lower part of the lintel. This lintel should be studied in detail to understand its meaning.



Lolei – Picture of the old conditions of the temple, around 1998-2000 with the towers in degraded conditions to the south covered by earth and grass. They were in perilous conditions and the Apsara Authority made simple wood supports to the doors with lintel and forbid the entrance to the internal ones (Photo Damien & Okh 2000).

Personal view on the Harihara style.

To show the gigantic difference between the lintels of the previous styles, especially the Kulen's and some Prei Khmeng lintels, suffice to look at the lintels of the Bakong Towers, Prah Kô and Lolei's which stand out for their vitality, homogeneous detail of execution and for being the first attempt at narrative power (my Prah Kô "Special" lintel). The carving recesses over the lintels in the brick wall visible of the Bakong Towers are an indication of the need for pediments intended to better exhibit images of gods and visually narrate stories. I assume that human images were not needed in Preangkorian culture because the dedication of the temple was sufficient.